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ECONOMIC LIFE IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Colin Clark

THIS ESSAY is designed to provide not so much a review of the profound issues of economic theory as an empirical survey and preliminary classification of the outstanding facts of economic life in this century.

The theoretical laws and empirical generalizations of economics are often found to work themselves out with surprising indifference to contemporary political events (as I remarked in the Preface to *The Economics of 1960*). But we must not generalize this conclusion too far. The framework within which these economic forces operate is, in the ultimate analysis, itself the product of human decisions. While it is not always possible to bring about economic progress by making the right political decisions, there can be no doubt that wrong political decisions and actions will eventually stop any economic progress. To carry the argument to its extreme conclusion, when real political anarchy prevails, nothing but the most primitive economic life is possible. (To historians, and indeed to students of current affairs in some parts of the world today, this proposition is all too clear.)

History is a "higher" science than economics in the sense that economics provides only one part of the material which has to be studied by history. The historian, studying also political, cultural, and religious life, has the wider view and can draw the more far-reaching conclusions. In just the same way economics is a "higher" science than engineering, which deals with the production of certain classes of commodities, whereas economics is concerned with the production and exchange of all commodities. Attempts by engineers to revolutionize economic theory have proved ludicrously mistaken; just the same thing will happen if the economist thinks that the phenomena

which he studies determine the whole course of history.

Professor Woodward in his Inaugural Lecture to the University of Oxford said:

> So vast and impressive is this kingdom, or shall I say, this republic of the economists, that historians, in particular, sometimes have to defend their own territory from becoming a kind of protectorate subject to the higher control of the economists, and to point out that of late years the attempt to explain all political action in terms of economic motives has pre-occupied and distorted historical inquiry not much less than the search for the Philosopher's Stone distracted scientific thought in the Middle Ages.

Economic events constitute one element but not the fundamental determinant in the chain of causation which is history. Like the geographer (who also sometimes makes extravagant claims) the economist can sometimes help to analyze the causation of historical events hitherto obscure. Deep-seated forces sometimes operate through the mechanism of economic changes; and extraneous economic and geographical factors can often postpone or accelerate the action of such forces. But these physical events are not the ultimate factors; the underlying substance of history consists of decisions of the human will, and of the spiritual forces of good and bad which influence that will.

It behooves the economist, therefore, to define his categories in terms consistent with the categories which historians must use. If our subject matter is the economic life of the whole world we must, even in the twentieth century, use a wide range of categories to describe it. Those given below are meant to be general historical or ethnographic categories into which economic classifications can be fitted.

1. Primitive Nomadic—dependent upon hunting or domestic herds. It is believed that at one time this was the manner of life of the entire human race; it still prevails over considerable areas of Africa, Arabia, Central Asia and the Arctic.

2. Primitive Agricultural Society—prevails over the greater part of Africa, most of Indonesia outside Java, and in the remoter parts of South America.

3. Civilized Societies—in various stages of development.

In cataloguing the civilizations now active in the world we may follow Professor Toynbee's schedule, and then classify them according to their vitality and progress in the economic sphere.

The world civilizations now extant are, in Professor Toynbee's terminology, the Western (prevailing over Western Europe, North and South America, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines); the Orthodox Christian; the Russian (an offshoot of

Orthodox Christendom, now probably to be regarded as a separate "civilization"); the twin Moslem civilizations which Professor Toynbee describes as Arabic and Iranic (stretching in a belt across the world from West Africa to Indonesia); the Hindu; the Far Eastern; and the Japanese (originally an offshoot of the Far Eastern; whether it should now be regarded as a new civilization, or in process of being absorbed into Western civilization, is still hard to say).

The accompanying table sets out in summary form the various parts of the world classified according to the development of their economic fortunes.

LEVELS OF REAL NATIONAL PRODUCT PER MAN-HOUR
(In International Units) *

Country	About					1913	1929	1939	1947
	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900				
U.S.A.	.28	.24	.28	.34	.42	.55	.78	1.00	1.19
Canada	..	..	..	..	.55	..	.61	.75	.96
Brazil	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.11
Argentina	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.39	.42
Venezuela	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.21	..
Ecuador	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.11	..
Cuba	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.20
Colombia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.08	..
Portugal	..	..	..	..	..	.11	..	..	..
Spain	..	..	..	..	.24	.27	.37	.27	.40
Eire	..	..	.11	..	..	..	.31	.32	..
Britain	.22	.23	.29	.31	.30	.37	.52	.58	.59
France	.12	.14	.15	.17	.19	..	.32	.38	.35
Belgium	..	..	..	.11	..	.22	..	.35	.32
Netherlands	..	..	..	..	.26	.29	.43	.45	.41
Switzerland	..	..	..	.15	.16	.23	.36	.37	.42
Italy	..	..	..	.10	.13	.13	.14	.20	.14
Germany	..	.17	.20	.23	.26	.31	.32	.49	..
Norway	..	..	..	.14	..	.21	.28	.38	.37
Denmark	..	..	..	..	..	.30	.37	.40	.33
Sweden	.10	.11	.12	.14	.17	.23	.32	.41	..
Finland	..	..	..	..	..	.19	.24	.33	..
Austria	..	..	..	..	.16	.23	.21	..	..
Czechoslovakia	..	..	..	..	..	.18	.28	.22	.18
Yugoslavia	..	..	..	..	..	.13	.14	.12	..
Greece	..	..	..	.13	..	.11	.15	..	..
Rumania	..	..	..	..	..	.19	.18	..	..
Hungary	..	..	..	..	.08	.14	.16	.17	.09
Poland	..	..	..	..	..	.20	.16	.19	.11
Esthonia	..	..	..	..	..	.11	..	..	..

* A unit representing quantities of goods and services rather than money: defined as the quantity of goods and services exchangeable for $1 over the average of the period 1925-34. (*Table continues on next page*).

Country	About					1913	1929	1939	1947
	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900				
Latvia	..	..	..	..	..	.11	.19	.22	..
U.S.S.R.	..	..	..	..	.15	.17	.15	.17	.14
South Africa	..	..	..	..	..	.10	.15	.19	.22
Turkey	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.15
Palestine: Jews	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.27	..
Arabs	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.19	..
India	.03	..	..	..	.05	..	..	..	..
China	..	..	..	..	..	..	.03	..	..
Japan	..	..	..	.03	.03	.05	.13	.19	..
Australia	..	..	..	.43	.43	.49	.65	.66	.67
New Zealand	..	..	..	..	.52	..	.65	.86	1.07

The first conclusion which we must draw is that the economically progressive civilizations are the Western, the Hindu, and the Japanese (if we consider the two latter as independent civilizations). The Orthodox Christian and Russian civilizations have not been entirely lacking in economic progress since 1900, but it has been slow and uncertain, and of a very much lower order of magnitude than in Western Europe. Throughout most of the rest of the world there has been little significant economic change since 1900, or for that matter for several centuries, except possibly a change for the worse.

So much for the preliminary generalization; now we must study exceptions, each of which is interesting.

Good or rapid economic progress is found in all countries adhering to Western civilization, with the significant exception of three countries in Europe and some areas in Central and South America.

The three European countries are Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. By religion and tradition these countries belong to Western civilization, though subject to Orthodox Christian influences. But during the past half century their economic progress has been as uncertain and slow as that of the Balkan countries. Their populations are too large for their agricultural resources, yet their industrial development has been inadequate and uncertain. They have been subjected to war, devastation, and political change to a greater degree than any country in Western Europe (as have Russia and the whole of Eastern Europe). It is doubtful whether we serve any good purpose by asking ourselves the hypothetical question of what the rate of economic progress would have been in Eastern Europe if it had enjoyed undisturbed peace and stable government over the last half century;

war and political change are part of the essential substance of history, and cannot readily be analyzed away.

But it is interesting that these three countries—Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia—which have shared the Eastern European experience alike in war and political upheaval, and in slowness of economic progress, should now be in the Russian sphere of influence. The Western countries which have been subjected to the greatest military and political upheavals are Italy, Germany, and Austria. Nevertheless, these have shown definite economic progress over the past half-century.

For Latin America and the Caribbean, our statistical information is very defective. Good economic progress has clearly been made in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Cuba. Three other countries—Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia—are now showing a good rate of advance, but their economic development began comparatively recently. In the rest of the area it appears, up to the present at any rate, that very little progress has been made.

Regarding India, there appears to be fairly good evidence that economic standards underwent a heavy decline in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a period of anarchy and distress. When political order was established in the nineteenth century, economic standards appear to have been as low as those in present-day China. During the past century they have undergone a gradual but persistent improvement, as is shown by comparisons collected by Indian statisticians. We may perhaps predict that the future life of India will be based on so intimate a compound of Hindu and of Western ideas as to constitute, perhaps, the beginnings of a new civilization.

The two Moslem civilizations, generally speaking, have not been characterized by economic progress. In fact, many of their adherents in Africa and Arabia, though members of the Arabic civilization in respect to their religion and culture, lead economically the lives of primitive nomads. Pakistan has reached a higher level of economic development than India, and it looks as if progress will continue; this country has received a strong admixture of Western and Hindu ideas. Turkey, in the years since 1922, has undergone a revolutionary westernization and is advancing economically; here westernization has been so thorough that it is almost permissible to ask if she still counts as a member of Moslem civilization.

Another exception, comparatively unimportant, is Malaya; while the Malay population is Moslem, the well-developed commercial life of that colony is almost entirely in the hands of Chinese settlers.

The recent history of China has been so disastrous that not only has there been no economic progress, it appears that there has been an actual decline of population. Demographers agree in dating the beginning of this decline at about the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Taiping Rebellion and forcible western intervention wrought immense physical and psychological damage. Political and economic deterioration were accelerated after the destruction of the Empire in 1911, and in recent decades China has been unable to maintain even the irrigation works on which the life of a large part of her population depends.

Other Far Eastern countries have not been subject to political anarchy. Their populations have grown rapidly, though their economic standards appear to have made little advance on those of half a century ago. Where there is extreme population pressure upon a limited area of agricultural land (e.g., certain parts of Indochina, Formosa and Korea), this is unavoidable (unless industries and foreign commerce are developed). In Burma, Ceylon, and Siam population pressure is not extreme.

Japan, like China, was subjected to forcible intervention from the West in the mid-nineteenth century. But she avoided anarchy and proceeded to make revolutionary changes in her political and social structure, beginning in 1868. Economically little change was visible till the present century. The Japan of 1900 was almost as desperately poor as China of the present day, or as Japan (or India) half a century earlier. But from 1900 onwards Japan began an economic revolution even more dramatic than the political revolutions of the earlier decades, and attained a rate of economic progress quite without parallel in the world's history. Leaving India far behind by the 1930's she had raised herself to the economic level of Italy, Russia, and Eastern Europe. The factors in this astonishing growth have not yet been fully analyzed, but among others we must mention the willingness of business and labor to accept, in the interest of national military and industrial power, the economic control exercised by the small ruling coterie of Crown bankers, generals, and admirals; the extreme thrift practiced not only by business proprietors, but also by peasants and wage earners; the diffusion of popular education and the consequent rapidity with which new techniques were learned; and also a matter little known to us, namely, the host of prosperous small businesses complementary to the large textile and engineering works which attracted the world's attention.

Finally, we must mention one small area whose economic development did not start till the 1920's, but is now proceeding rapidly—

namely, Palestine. One might almost say that this community had been created to upset the generalizations of historians; we cannot yet say with what civilization it should be classified; it is doubtful whether it can be regarded as an integral part of Western civilization.

Turning back now to the countries making steady or rapid economic progress, we may examine further those whose progress has been exceptionally rapid. The definition of this category is an increase in real income per man-hour considerably more than twofold over the period 1900 to 1950. Canada was on the border line for admission to this category; she was excluded for the somewhat paradoxical reason that her level of productivity and income were already extremely high in 1900, in fact probably the highest in the world at that date.

The countries of exceptionally rapid economic progress are scattered through the world in a remarkable manner—the United States, Japan, New Zealand, South Africa, Switzerland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Have these countries any common characteristic? What price, if any, have they had to pay for their rapid economic progress?

It is not, as some may wish to infer, an issue between free enterprise and government intervention. While America, Switzerland, Belgium, and (in most respects) South Africa had economies based on the principles of free enterprise, there has been a considerable measure of social intervention and control of economic life in the Scandinavian countries, in New Zealand, and above all, in Japan.

The generalization which can be made about these countries is much more interesting and fruitful. They are all countries highly dependent upon international commerce, apart from America, which is exceptionally *independent* of international commerce. In the case of the smaller countries, the price which they had to pay for economic progress was a willingness to specialize their economies to a very high degree and to concentrate upon producing that limited range of goods for which their skill and natural resources best fitted them, and which could be most remuneratively sold in the world market.

This is shown in the following table, where countries' dependence upon international trade is measured by the ratio of imports[1] to national income.

[1] Goods for re-export are excluded; by measuring on imports rather than on exports, we also take into account the proceeds from the sale in the international market of services such as shipping, of international investment, and also net international borrowing.

IMPORTS AS PERCENTAGES OF NATIONAL INCOME

(both measured in real terms in I.U.)

	1900	1913	1929	1938
U.S.A.	3.9	4.2	4.3	2.3
Canada	11.3	14.2	19.2	11.0
Britain	26.7	18.4*	19.8	17.3
France	14.8	17.1	14.7	13.0
Belgium	47.6	49.1	29.2	29.3
Netherlands	..	..	31.0	25.8
Switzerland	50.0	42.5	29.0	24.8
Italy	9.0	16.0	16.5	9.2
Germany	14.3	12.9	13.0	6.6
Norway	27.5	32.2	35.1	36.2
Denmark	..	25.6	25.7	20.2
Sweden	23.5	19.9	22.1	24.6
Finland	..	20.2	25.4	23.6
Japan	12.3	14.3	11.0	5.6
Australia	29.4	24.6	16.4	14.0
New Zealand	18.7	..	21.9	22.5
South Africa	..	31.0	24.7	26.2

* The British figure for 1913 is reduced owing to the fact that Britain made an abnormally high net international *lending*, equivalent to nearly ten per cent of national income in that year.

It is generally the case that the smaller the country, the more intense the degree of specialization necessary. There are dangers about this state of affairs. It makes the economy particularly subject to sudden changes whose origin lies elsewhere, and the whole country more vulnerable to war or blockade. But it undoubtedly yields a high and rapidly rising national income.

Moves towards national self-sufficiency (except in an area which can offer a really large market, like the U.S.A.) cause a serious slowing down in the rate of economic progress. Australia is a grotesque example of this. The size of the home market is too small to support a prosperous manufacturing industry and probably will be for a long time to come. The moral is pointed by the much greater rate of economic progress in New Zealand which (until recently) concentrated upon livestock production for international commerce, rather than attempting to build up a range of industries serving the home market.

Outstanding blows were struck at the system of international trade during the 1930's by the U.S.A. through its tariff policy, and by Germany, Italy, and Japan, which were rapidly moving towards self-sufficiency as a war preparation. Britain's retreat from free trade was slow and half-hearted. It probably did much more harm by the example it set the other countries than by its actual effects.

What was unprecedented about the development of the U.S.A. was not only the high and rising level of average income, but also the

rapidity of population growth, owing to high rate of natural increase and to unlimited immigration up to 1914. This created such a rich and expanding market within the country that industries could develop to a large and remunerative scale without any serious need to seek export markets.

We may look at the issue from another point of view, namely, that of transportation, without which economic development is impossible. All the other countries mentioned (even including Switzerland) look to ocean transport to handle their expanding export trade and to bring them required food and raw materials. These countries recognize their dependence upon it and seek to associate themselves politically with a strong naval power (Britain), or to become one themselves (Japan).

The economic development of the U.S.A., on the other hand, was rendered possible by the construction of an internal railroad system. The linking of the Atlantic and Pacific systems in 1869 was clearly a turning point in U.S. economic history. It is not always realized that the U.S. railway builders constructed a system of exceptional efficiency and carrying capacity. In terms of the labor and materials used in operation and maintenance, the U.S. railways work at only about one-quarter or one-fifth the cost, per ton mile carried, of the European railways. It is very probable that, in the absence of this highly efficient railway system, U.S. industry and commerce would have shown a very much slower development than they have.

Many other countries dream of attaining a high degree of economic self-sufficiency as has the U.S.A., but few are likely to do so. No other country is yet able to offer within its own borders a market on anything like the scale which the U.S. could already offer by 1900 (see Table following).

REAL NATIONAL INCOMES IN MILLIARDS OF I.U.

	1875	1900	1925	1947
U.S.A.	11.4	33.6	75.4	152.7
Canada	..	3.0	4.7	11.1
Britain	8.6	13.1	20.5	30.1
France	7.7	9.3	14.1	11.7
Germany	7.7	15.3	17.9	31.9*
Russia	8.5	13.1	15.0	27.6**
Japan	1.2	1.9	7.3	19.1**
India	10.2	13.6	20.6	25.4***

* 1937.
** 1940.
*** 1944-45. Includes 6.0 milliards income of territory which became Pakistan in 1947.

We cannot hope fully to explain these instances of abnormally rapid growth until we have first studied carefully the mechanism of normal economic growth. This involves taking very much wider views both in space and time. For the purpose of this essay, it is only for the period beginning in 1900 that a comprehensive review is attempted and, in any case, a survey of remoter periods of economic history is outside the author's competence. But we may sketch in a little background.

Of the countries which are now developing economically, India, Japan, Brazil, and Turkey were, in 1900, still in that extreme poverty which characterizes, say, China and Indonesia today. North America and Western Europe enjoyed real incomes per man-hour at some 40 to 60 per cent of present day levels. Had these been built up rapidly from levels of primitive poverty a century or so earlier? In general terms, the answer is No. So far as we can interpret the records of economic history, they seem to show a slow and uncertain growth over a long period, with some periods of stagnation or actual recession. In Britain the closing decades of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century were such a period—culminating in the "hungry forties" which are still remembered. It was a period of greatly expanding population and of development of international commerce; but available economic resources could only just about keep pace with increasing population.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Prussia and the Scandinavian countries seem to have been still at a very low economic level. In North America, even at the time of Adam Smith, real wages were markedly above the English level.

In earlier centuries we have at times fairly clear indications of economic advance; for instance, there seems to be a good consensus among authorities that real wages in England rose markedly from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, but it also seems necessary to infer from the available data that there were long centuries of stagnation. In spite of superficial appearances of wealth, the level of real wages in Spain, for instance, seems to have been stationary through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A high level of economic development—the highest in Europe at that date—had been attained in the Netherlands by the seventeenth century, apparently built up gradually by centuries of commercial and industrial activity.

It is when we turn to the available information about the ancient world that we are forcibly struck by the possibilities of economic retrogression. We can get some idea of real wages from indicators of economic development in the Periclean, Hellenistic, and Augustan

periods, and we have Professor Rostovtzeff's authority for putting economic development under the Egyptian, Babylonian, and Persian monarchies in the same category. We find these economic standards to be greatly in advance of those of present day Eastern Europe or even Italy. In India, as mentioned above, there seems to be fairly good evidence of a heavy decline between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries; in China the evidence of decline is all too clear.

The factors making for economic growth are by no means therefore apparent. We should by now have long since discarded the naive nineteenth century view that economic progress all depended upon the discovery of the steam engine and a few kindred inventions. We now see that many premechanical civilizations could attain an advanced stage of economic development, and also that modern western mechanical knowledge can be diffused throughout the world without necessarily bearing valuable economic fruits.

We are now beginning to realize that deeper and subtler factors are involved. The most important requisite is a high degree of organization and specialization in commerce as well as in manufacture. A necessary condition of this, by no means always recognized, is a high level of popular education, not only in technical specialisms, but also a good measure of general education, without which men's minds tend to remain rigid and unenterprising. Underlying these are the moral and spiritual factors involved, the willingness to work hard, the prudence and self-restraint, the innate sense of honesty and justice without which no commercial community can attain anything but a superficial success. These and other qualities must also express themselves in the political order of society. The man of commerce, who in the nineteenth century generally suspected and despised political authority, is now coming to realize (perhaps too late) that no economic prosperity is possible without a strong and just and stable government, truly concerned for the welfare of its people and ensuring so far as is humanly possible that each man shall be able to receive and retain the just fruits of his labor and effort.

When we take these considerations into account, we can understand much better the reasons for the presence and absence of economic progress in different parts of the world. We begin to realize the immense economic consequences which flow from political ideas and political events. In Latin America "despotism tempered by assassination" and persistent fear of revolution and expropriation have prevented or slowed down economic development in spite of abundance of natural resources. A century of British rule in India, establishing political order and then peaceably handing it over to two new

sovereign states, created the conditions under which economic progress could again begin, while China was all the time sinking deeper into anarchy and misery. Most of Africa's population is still living in primitive paganism, and no marked economic development can be expected for some time yet.

In Southeast Europe and the Middle East we have a more difficult problem. We have to explain the economic retrogression from what were undoubtedly higher levels in the past.

Over a considerable part of this area it appears that we can attribute economic decline to the long centuries of Turkish misrule. Conditions of arbitrary taxation, kidnapping, military oppression, and general misgovernment discouraged any effort in the production of wealth and caused those who had any wealth to conceal it rather than to venture it in new enterprises. The traditions of centuries could not have been readily changed, even if the post-Turkish governments had been uniformly just and enlightened (which was by no means the case).

It is not intended to imply that the post-Turkish governments were not an improvement. Under Turkish rule conditions were so wretched that little, if any, population increase was possible, and the level of population in many important areas was far below that of ancient times. The Balkan countries at the beginning of the present century entered a phase of rapid population increase. We speculate about what would have been the necessary conditions to provide a rising standard of living for their populations (freedom from wars, substantial investment of foreign capital, and so on); but in some ways we may compare their position with that of Western Europe in the late eighteenth century, when a population growth apparently beyond the capacity of the economy to provide for it had been arousing Malthus' fears.

Refutations of Malthus are *vieux jeu* and are generally inept. Let us forget his interesting formulation and reconsider the problem of population and economic resources in the light of the information now available to us.

In the first place primitive populations (likewise populations of "over-mature" civilizations, whose economic life has sunk to a low level) do not increase rapidly. Rapid increase in population is possible only in communities which have a stable political life, have reached a certain (admittedly low) economic level, and possess at least the elements of medical knowledge to control mortality and epidemics, and the willingness to put that knowledge into effect. The great acceleration of population growth in Western Europe in the

late eighteenth century has been shown to have been due to a decline in mortality due to medical improvements, not to any increase in the size of the family. These same factors account for the rapidly rising population in Russia, Japan, and India since the mid-nineteenth century and in Southeast Europe, Latin America, and Southeast Asia in the present century.[2] We also have some historical evidence of population advancing rapidly in Western Europe in the early Middle Ages (apparently rising from a minimum in the eighth century), while in ancient Greece it appears that population rose so rapidly as to press heavily upon the means of subsistence. Both in medieval Europe and in ancient Greece medical knowledge was at any rate advanced well beyond the primitive level.

To a society whose economic life is based predominantly on agriculture, increased population imposes no economic hardship so long as it still has access to unused land capable of cultivation. This is the case in Latin America and in some Asiatic countries today. It was the case in Western Europe until quite late in the eighteenth century, close to the time when Malthus wrote.

When all the available land is cultivated, the so-called Law of Diminishing Returns begins to operate. This law is almost universally misunderstood and needs to be stated precisely. The law states

[2] These trends were by no means clear to contemporaries. Sir Robert Giffen, the most distinguished statistician of the period, speaking at a dinner to welcome the coming century which the Manchester Statistical Society gave at the end of 1900, drew the following conclusions: "The non-European races . . . have been living in the same places and under the same conditions as they have done for centuries, peopled up to the limits of subsistence under those conditions, and, therefore, incapable of expansion. The result is that the forces of civilization as against those of the black and yellow races have become practically irresistible. It is a reasonable probability that unless some great internal change should take place in the ideas and conduct of the European races themselves, the population of five hundred millions will, in another century, become one of one thousand five hundred to two thousand millions. The black and yellow races still remaining, as far as one can see, stationary, this will make a greatly changed world. . . .

"The next century will not be far advanced before the U.S. which is already in reality the most powerful single state in the world, will be generally recognized as such. . . . International politics will be more and more limited to the affairs of what are already the four great powers—the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Russia."

We may say in his defense that at that time it was not yet clear that the Indian population was increasing rapidly, and Japan was, to Western eyes, an obscure comic-opera sort of country. What he underrated was the great change in the "ideas and conduct" of the Europeans and the North Americans, which had already begun at the time he spoke.

that if we have two similar pieces of land side by side, cultivated by the same methods, the one cultivated by the larger number will yield less per head (though more in the aggregate) than the other piece of land.

Thus we see that for increasing population to lead to economic hardship three conditions must be fulfilled:

(1) The population must be primarily dependent upon agriculture for a livelihood.

(2) All available land must be already cultivated.

(3) The people must be incapable of improving their methods of cultivation.

These conditions have applied to a considerable extent in Eastern Europe and some countries of Southeast Asia. They applied in Japan before 1868. But in most countries with a dense and increasing population (Great Britain, the Low Countries, present-day Japan and India) agricultural methods are being continually improved and the effect of diminishing returns is counteracted.

In societies where industry and commerce represent the principal element in economic life, not only does the Law of Diminishing Returns cease to have effect, but is replaced by its exact opposite, namely, the Law of Increasing Returns. In most industrial activities, the greater the scale of the operation the lower the costs per unit of output and the greater the net return per person engaged. Any country which is feeling the pressure of population upon a limited area of agricultural land can escape the effects of this pressure if it can successfully divert a large part of its population to industrial and commercial activities, exchanging manufactured goods for the surplus agricultural products of other countries as well as providing a higher standard of living for its own people. This was the policy of the outstanding communities of ancient Greece, of the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, of Britain in the early nineteenth century, of Japan in the present century. Once the economic life of a country is firmly established on an industrial basis it gains economically, not loses, from any further increase in population. By a strange paradox this is now what it finds most difficult to attain. The installation of urban and commercial ways of life, with their intense competitiveness, greatly weakens the incentive to have children and the average size of the family rapidly declines. This change began in Western Europe in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and in the present century is taking place in three countries as different as Russia, India, and Japan.

Generally, the process of industrialization goes on side by side with the improvement of agricultural productivity. In many countries the

quantity of agricultural produce obtained per man engaged is increasing at the rate of about 1½ per cent per year, a rate quite comparable with the increase in productivity in the urban economy. The factors making for this increase are in some ways the same as those making for industrial progress. Agricultural progress demands equipment, fertilizers, and insecticides; scientific knowledge and means of diffusing it, which can be done only in an agricultural population of fairly good general education; and assurance of political stability.

Manufacturing industry is the dynamic element in the urban economy. Other activities—transport, building, commerce, and the professions—can improve their methods of productivity but their progress is generally slower than that of manufacturing industry. In the initial stages, where manufacturing methods are replacing those of handicraft, the economic consequences may be revolutionary. Within a generation productivity per man will be at least doubled and in a few trades may be increased tenfold or more. Most of these benefits are passed on to the consumer; but they still leave enough to enrich enormously a small class of manufacturers, and likewise may displace and leave in poverty very large numbers of handicraft workers. This change was carried through to completion in Britain and the U.S.A. in the nineteenth century. But even in parts of Western Europe it is not complete, and in Asia the process is still in its initial stages.

The economic development of Russia has been in a class by itself. Industrialization was under way at the beginning of the present century. After the disorganization of the war and the revolutionary period, the 1913 level of industrial production had been restored by 1925; industrialization pressed forward rapidly during the thirties.

VALUE OF RUSSIAN REAL NATIONAL INCOME
MILLIARDS OF I.U.

	1913	1928	1934	1938
Consumption of food	10.2	12.2	8.6	10.3
Consumption of other goods and services	4.7	4.1	2.6	5.1
Investment and Government Expenditure	3.2	2.0	5.0	7.7
Total Production	18.1	18.3	16.2	23.1
I.U. per head of population:				
Consumption	107	107	68	91
Total Production	130	120	98	136

But all this was being done against a background of unprogressive agriculture. The output of farm products showed little

expansion and declined heavily under conditions of "compulsory collectivization" in the early thirties. The loss of agricultural production about equaled in value the gain in industrial production.

Most manufacturing processes, by their nature, can only be remuneratively undertaken for a large market. This requires, in the first place, low transport costs. We saw earlier how the countries which had made the most rapid economic progress were those able to distribute their produce by sea, except for the U.S.A., which distributes its products by a low-cost railway system. But besides low transport costs, success in manufacturing demands access to a large market not seriously impeded by tariffs or other political intervention, and also (because manufacturing has to be planned long in advance) a reasonable prospect of the maintenance of such access. In contrast to the wide expanse of free trade throughout the world in the second half of the nineteenth century, in the present century many countries, which were in a position to do so, have attempted to use political influence of some kind or other to secure export markets for their manufactures, whether by imperial preference as in Britain and France, by "Schachtism" in Germany, or by direct military action in Japan. Quite apart from whether these methods are just, it is very doubtful whether they are effective. Smaller countries such as Belgium, Norway, and Switzerland have realized that they cannot attempt to reshape the pattern of world trade and have accepted it as they find it. By concentrating upon the production of commodities salable in world markets, and trusting to Britain or the U.S.A. to maintain a fair measure of freedom of world trade, they have been able to make rapid economic progress.

The market for manufactured goods which any country can offer depends, of course, on its population and their level of economic well-being. But it depends on more than that. If we compare a rural and an urban population of the same degree of economic well-being, the former will spend more on manufactured goods. The latter tend to spend more on the product of handicraft and service industries.

But there is another distinction much more important than this. The tendency towards economic equalitarianism creates a greatly increased market for manufactured goods. When wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few they spend a substantial proportion on domestic and personal services, on the construction of mansions, on the purchase of handmade goods, and on other activities which do not create a market for manufacture.

The most convenient way of summarizing the position regarding the distribution of income is to measure the relative numbers of in-

comes at different levels. In an equalitarian society there will be a large number of incomes in the middle range for each high income; in an inequalitarian society there will not.

NUMBER OF INCOMES ABOVE £500 FOR EACH INCOME ABOVE £5,000*

	1900	1925	1939	Most Recent Year
U.S.A.	28	35	59	89
Canada	..	..	69	191
Latin America	..	..	..	20 (approx.)
Britain	20	41	37	65
France	48	..	66	..
Germany	40	62	47	..
Denmark	..	68	87	380
Sweden	25	52	33	251
India	28	17	35	45
Japan	78	51	..	..
Australia	34	..	89	132
New Zealand	..	..	224	..

* According to the "Pareto Law" about the same ratio of numbers would hold for any tenfold ratio of income (e.g., £750 and £7,500) so long as the lower figure lies within the usual range of incomes. Mathematically, this ratio is the antilog of the "Pareto coefficient."

Except in Latin America, the trend towards equalitarianism is striking, and it is worldwide.

Professor Toynbee has described the present day world as being shaped by the "titanic forces" of democracy and industrialism. One may perhaps be permitted to add that there is quite a deep and subtle economic link between these two forces. Democracy makes it possible for the wage and salary earners to use their political power to obtain higher incomes for themselves at the expense of property and privilege; the spending of the more equally distributed incomes creates an increased demand for manufactured goods and so accelerates the process of industrialization; and industrialization in its turn assists in the dissemination and fulfillment of democratic ideas.

But this last proposition may be specious. Examples of New Zealand and Denmark show that equalitarianism may be more pronounced in an agrarian than in an industrial society. As a matter of fact, on this issue of society's attitude towards equalitarianism and privilege, the roots lie deep. England was a country of privilege and concentrated wealth when she was predominantly agrarian in 1800; almost exactly the same ratios of income distribution prevailed a century later by which time the country had become almost completely

industrialized. In Denmark the peasants (aided by the monarchy) fought and won their battle for political power in the nineteenth century, and an equalitarian income distribution has prevailed ever since, alike in the country and in the cities.

The process of industrialization may proceed with great rapidity at first, but a time must come when it will be checked. However urban or equalitarian a society may be, there is a limit to the quantity of manufactured goods which it can consume. As real incomes advance, a steadily increasing proportion will be spent on other things—commercial service, travel, education, entertainment, building, governmental activities—a category which can be classified together for convenience as the "service industries."

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING POPULATION

	1900	1920	1939
U.S.A.—			
Agriculture	38.2	27.6	18.9
Manufacture	19.8	27.2	26.8
Services	42.0	45.2	54.3
Britain—			
Agriculture	9.0	7.0	7.1
Manufacture	38.4	46.0	39.5
Services	52.6	47.0	53.4
France—			
Agriculture	33.1	29.4	24.2
Manufacture	38.0	32.1	32.7
Services	28.9	38.5	43.1
Germany—			
Agriculture	27.3	17.8	14.0
Manufacture	40.6	42.6	40.2
Services	32.1	39.6	45.8
Sweden—			
Agriculture	42.5	34.9	26.5
Manufacture	18.2	28.5	30.5
Services	39.3	36.6	43.0
Australia—			
Agriculture	25.4	23.0	20.5
Manufacture	24.2	24.3	27.8
Services	50.4	52.7	51.7
New Zealand—			
Agriculture	29.6	27.3	25.2
Manufacture	25.9	20.5	21.1
Services	44.5	52.2	53.7

"Agriculture" includes Forestry and Fishing.
"Manufacture" includes Mining.

In the most economically advanced countries, it is seen, the proportion of the working population engaged in manufacture has already begun to decline, and the "service industries" show an increasing predominance. This fact, at present little known, may eventually greatly affect their social structure. An increasing proportion of their business activity will be of a kind which can successfully be carried on by small family concerns, and that requiring large-scale organization will become of less relative importance.

The closing of opportunities for international commerce by protectionism has certainly put advantages in the way of countries which can trade in a large internal market. The internal market of the U.S.A. was already vast by 1900, and it is an interesting paradox that the U.S.A. should have been much the greatest beneficiary from the current economic nationalism which has run over the world during the last half-century. Of the European countries Germany offered the largest internal market, and it is not surprising that German economists found themselves tempted by ideas of cartelization and economic nationalism. In 1914 the German economy was rapidly expanding, but war and inflation have checked German growth. The Russian internal market will eventually become large enough to facilitate remarkable industrial development, but hitherto its progress has been slow for reasons stated.

The dependence of manufacturing industry (and most transport industries) upon the size of their market, under the Law of Increasing Returns, is the principal factor upsetting the "natural harmony" of laissez faire which the classical economists prophesied. A society whose economic activities were confined to agriculture, building, commerce and similar activities, would probably find strict laissez faire (both in its internal transactions and in its trading relations with other countries) its most advantageous economic system. But this is by no means necessarily the case when some of its industries or transport can gain economies from large-scale organization. It is the need to secure markets for the output of large-scale industry which leads to economic nationalism and protectionism on the one hand, to socialist control of industry on the other, or to their compound in National Socialism.

THE LOGIC OF LIBERTY

PERILS OF INCONSISTENCY

Michael Polanyi

MY SUBJECT is the doctrine of intellectual freedom. I shall argue that its teaching, as handed down to us, is intrinsically inconsistent and that the fall of liberty on the continent of Europe was an outcome of this inadequacy. Freedom of thought destroyed itself when a self-contradictory conception of liberty was pursued to its ultimate conclusions.

To present this argument, I must glance back for a moment to the very beginnings of systematic thinking. Modern thought in the widest sense emerged with the emancipation of the human mind from a mythological and magical interpretation of the universe. We know when this first happened, at what place, and by what method. This act of liberation was due to the Ionian philosophers who flourished in the sixth century B. C. They were succeeded by other philosophers of Greece covering a period of a thousand years. These ancient thinkers enjoyed much freedom of speculation without ever raising decisively the issues of intellectual freedom.

The millenium of ancient philosophy was brought to a close by St. Augustine. There followed the long rule of Christian theology and the Church of Rome over all departments of thought. The rule of ecclesiastic authority was first eroded from the twelfth century on by a number of sporadic intellectual achievements. Then, as the Italian Renaissance blossomed out, the leading artists and thinkers of the time brought religion more and more into neglect. The Italian Church itself seemed to yield to the new secular interests. Had the whole of Europe been at the time of the same mind as Italy, Renaissance humanism might have established freedom of thought everywhere, simply by default of opposition. Europe might have returned to—or, if you like, relapsed into—a liberalism resembling that of pre-

Christian antiquity. Whatever may have followed after that, our present disasters would not have occurred.

However, there arose instead in a number of European countries, in Germany, Switzerland, Spain, a fervent religious revival, accompanied by a schism of the Christian churches, which was to dominate people's minds for almost two centuries. The Catholic Church sharply reaffirmed its authority over the whole intellectual sphere. The thoughts of men were moved and politics shaped by the struggle between Protestantism and Catholicism, to which all contemporary issues contributed by alliance to one side or the other.

By the beginning of the present century—to which I am leading up now—the wars between Catholics and Protestants had long ceased; yet the formulation of liberal thought still remained largely determined by the reaction of past generations against the period of religious wars. Liberalism was motivated, to start with, by detestation of religious fanaticism. It appealed to reason for a cessation of religious strife. This desire to curb religious violence was the prime motive of liberalism both in the Anglo-American and in the Continental area. Yet, from the beginning the reaction against religious fanaticism differed somewhat in these two areas, and this difference has since become increasingly accentuated, so that in consequence liberty was upheld in the Western area up to this day and suffered a collapse in the territories of Central and Eastern Europe.

The origins of Anglo-American liberalism are to be found in Milton and Locke. Their argument for freedom of thought was twofold. In its first part (for which we may quote the Areopagitica) freedom from authority is demanded, so that truth may be discovered. The main inspiration of this movement was the struggle of the rising natural sciences against the authority of Aristotle. Its program was to let everyone state his beliefs, and to allow people to listen and form their own opinion; the ideas which would prevail in a free and open battle of wits would be as close an approximation to the truth as can be humanly achieved. We may call this the antiauthoritarian formula of liberty. Closely related to it is the second half of the argument for liberty, which is based on philosophic doubt. While its origins go back a long way (right to the philosophers of antiquity), this argument was first formulated as a political doctrine by Locke. It says simply, that we can never be so sure of the truth in matters of religion as to warrant the imposition of our views on others. These two pleas for freedom of thought were put forward and were accepted by England at a time when religious beliefs were unshaken and indeed dominant throughout the nation. The new tolerance aimed pre-eminently

at the reconciliation of different denominations in the service of God. Atheists were refused tolerance by Locke, as socially unreliable.

On the Continent, the twofold doctrine of free thought—anti-authoritarianism and philosophic doubt—gained ascendancy somewhat later than in England and moved on straight away to a more extreme position. This was first effectively formulated in the eighteenth century by the philosophy of Enlightenment, which was primarily an attack on religious authority and particularly on the Catholic Church. It professed a radical skepticism. The books of Voltaire and of the French Encyclopedists expounding this doctrine were widely read in France, while abroad their ideas spread into Germany and far into Eastern Europe. Frederick the Great and Catherine of Russia were among their correspondents and disciples. The type of Voltairian aristocrat, represented by the old Prince Bolkonski in *War and Peace,* was to be found at court and in feudal residences over many parts of continental Europe at the close of the eighteenth century. The depth to which the philosophers had influenced political thought in their own country was to be revealed by the French Revolution.

Accordingly, the mood of French Enlightenment, though often angry, was always supremely confident. Its followers promised mankind relief from all social ills. One of the central figures of the movement, the Baron d'Holbach, declared this in his *Système de la Nature* (1770) as follows:

> Man is miserable, simply because he is ignorant. His mind is so infected with prejudices, that one might think him forever condemned to err. . . . It is error that has evoked the religious fears, which shrivel up men with fright, or make them butcher each other for chimeras. The hatred, persecutions, massacres and tragedies of which, under the pretexts of the interests of Heaven, the earth has been the repeated theatre, are one and all the outcome of error.

This explanation of human miseries and the remedy which is promised for them continued to carry conviction to the intelligentsia of Europe long after the French Revolution. It remained an axiom among progressive people on the Continent that to achieve light and liberty, you had first to break the power of the clergy and eliminate the influence of religious dogma. Battle after battle was fought in this campaign. Perhaps the fiercest engagement was that about the Dreyfus affair at the close of the century, in which clericalism was finally defeated in France, and further weakened throughout Europe. It was about this time that W. E. H. Lecky wrote in his *History of Rationalism in Europe* (1893):

All over Europe the priesthood are now associated with a policy of toryism, of reaction or of obstruction. All over Europe the organs that represent dogmatic interests are in permanent opposition to the progressive tendencies around them, and are rapidly sinking into contempt.

I well remember this triumphant sentiment. We looked back on earlier times as on a period of darkness, and with Lucretius we cried in horror: *"Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum"*—what evils religion had inspired! So we rejoiced at the superior knowledge of our age and its assured liberties. The promises of peace and freedom given to the world by French Enlightenment had indeed been wonderfully fulfilled toward the end of the nineteenth century. You could travel all over Europe and America without a passport and settle down wherever you pleased. With the exception of Russia, you could print throughout Europe anything without previous censorship and could sharply oppose any government or creed, with impunity. In Germany—much criticized at the time for being authoritarian—biting caricatures of the Emperor were published freely. Even in Russia, whose regime was most oppressive, Marx's *Capital* appeared in translation immediately after its first publication and received favorable reviews throughout the press. In the whole of Europe not more than a few hundred people were forced into political exile. Throughout the planet all men of European race were living in free intellectual and personal communication. It is hardly surprising that the universal establishment of peace and tolerance through the victory of modern Enlightenment was confidently expected at the turn of the century by a large majority of educated people on the Continent of Europe.

Thus we entered on the twentieth century as on an age of infinite promise. Few people realized at the time that we were walking into a minefield—even though the mines had all been prepared and carefully laid in open daylight by well-known thinkers of our own age. Today we know that our expectations proved false. We have all learned to trace the collapse of freedom in the twentieth century to the writings of certain philosophers, particularly of Marx, Nietzsche, and their common ancestors, Fichte and Hegel. But the story has yet to be told how we came to welcome as liberators the philosophies which were to destroy liberty.

I have said that I consider the collapse of freedom in Central and Eastern Europe as the outcome of an internal contradiction in the doctrine of liberty. Wherein lies this inconsistency? Why did it destroy freedom in large parts of Continental Europe and yet have

no similar effects so far in the Western or Anglo-American area of our civilization?

The argument of doubt put forward by Locke in favor of tolerance says that since it is impossible to demonstrate which religion is true, we should admit them all. This implies that we must not impose beliefs that are not demonstrable. Let us apply this doctrine to ethical principles. It follows that unless ethical principles can be demonstrated with certainty, we should refrain from imposing them and should tolerate their total denial. Actually, ethical principles cannot be demonstrated: you cannot prove the obligation to tell the truth, to uphold justice and mercy. It would follow therefore that a system of mendacity, lawlessness, and cruelty is to be accepted on equal terms as an alternative to ethical principles. However, a society in which unscrupulous propaganda, violence, and terror prevail offers no scope for tolerance. Here is exhibited the inconsistency of a liberalism based on philosophic doubt: freedom of thought is destroyed by the extension of doubt to the field of traditional ideals.

The consummation of this destructive process was prevented in the Anglo-American region by an instinctive reluctance to pursue the accepted philosophic premises to their ultimate conclusions. One way of avoiding this was by pretending that ethical principles could actually be scientifically demonstrated. Locke himself started this train of thought by asserting that good and evil could be identified with pleasure and pain, and suggesting that all ideals of good behavior are merely maxims of prudence.

However, the utilitarian calculus cannot in fact demonstrate our obligations to ideals which demand serious sacrifices from us. A man's sincerity in professing his ideals is to be measured rather by the *lack* of prudence which he shows in pursuing them. The utilitarian confirmation of unselfishness is in fact no more than a pretense, by which traditional ideals are made acceptable to a philosophically skeptical age. Camouflaged as long-term selfishness, the traditional ideals of man are protected from destruction by skepticism.

I believe that the preservation up to this day of Western civilization along the lines of the Anglo-American tradition of liberty was due to this speculative restraint, amounting to a veritable suspension of logic within the British empiricist philosophy. It was enough to pay philosophic lip service to the supremacy of the pleasure principle. Ethical standards were not really replaced by new purposes; still less was there any inclination toward abandoning these standards in practice. The masses of the people and their leaders in public life could in fact disregard the accepted philosophy, both in deciding their per-

sonal conduct and in building up their political institutions. The whole sweeping advance of moral aspirations to which the Age of Reason opened the way, the English Revolution, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the first liberation of the slaves in the British Empire, the Factory Reforms, the founding of the League of Nations, Britain's stand against Hitler, the offering of Lend-Lease, UNRRA and Marshall Plan aid, the sending of millions of food parcels by individual Americans to unknown beneficiaries in Europe—in all these decisive actions public opinion was swayed by moral forces, by charity, by a desire for justice, and a detestation of social evils, which disregarded the fact that it had no true justification in the prevailing philosophy of the age. Utilitarianism and other allied materialistic formulations of traditional ideals remained on paper. The philosophic impairment of universal moral standards led only to their verbal replacement; it was a sham replacement, or to give it a technical designation, we may speak of a "pseudo-substitution" of moral principles by utilitarian purposes.

The speculative and practical restraints which saved liberalism from self-destruction in the Anglo-American area were due in the first place to the positively religious character of this liberalism. So long as philosophic doubt was applied only in order to secure equal rights to all religions and was prohibited from demanding equal rights also for irreligion, the same restraint would automatically apply in respect to moral beliefs. A skepticism which was kept on short leash for the sake of preserving religious beliefs, would hardly become a menace to fundamental moral principles. A second restraint on skepticism, closely related to the first, lay in the establishment of democratic institutions at a time when religious beliefs were still strong. These institutions (for example, the American Constitution) gave effect to the moral principles which underlie a free society. The tradition of democracy embodied in these institutions proved strong enough to uphold in practice the moral standards of a free society against any speculation which would question their validity.

Both these protective restraints, however, were absent in those parts of Europe where liberalism was based on French Enlightenment. This movement being antireligious, it imposed no restraint on skeptical speculations; nor were the standards of morality embodied here in democratic institutions. When a feudal society, dominated by religious authority, was attacked by a radical skepticism, there emerged a liberalism which was unprotected either by a religious or a civic tradition against destruction by the philosophic skepticism to which it owed its origin.

Let me describe briefly what happened. From the middle of the eighteenth century, Continental thought faced up seriously to the fact that the universal standards of reason could not be philosophically justified in the light of the skeptical attitude which had initiated the rationalist movement. The great philosophic tumult which started in the second half of the eighteenth century on the Continent of Europe and which finally led up to the philosophic disasters of our own days represented an incessant preoccupation with the collapse of the philosophic foundations of rationalism. Universal standards of human behavior having fallen into philosophic disrepute, various substitutes were put forward in their place. I shall indicate the main forms under which these made their appearance.

The first kind of substitute standard was derived from the contemplation of individuality. The case for uniqueness of the individual is set out as follows in the opening words of Rousseau's *Confessions.* He talks about himself: "Myself alone. . . . There is no one who resembles me. . . . We shall see whether Nature was right in breaking the mould into which she had cast me." Individuality challenged here the world to judge it, if it can, by universal standards. Creative genius claimed to be the renewer of all values and therefore to be incommensurable. This claim was to be extended to whole nations; according to it, each nation had its unique set of values which could not be validly criticized in the light of universal reason. A nation's only obligation was, like that of the unique individual, to realize its own powers. In following the call of its destiny, a nation must allow no other nation to stand in its way.

If you apply this claim for the supremacy of uniqueness—which we may call Romanticism—to single persons, you arrive at a general hostility to society, as exemplified in the anticonventional and almost extraterritorial attitude of the Continental bohème. If applied to nations, it results on the contrary in the conception of a unique national destiny which claims the absolute allegiance of all its citizens. The national leader combines the advantages of both. He can stand entranced in the admiration of his own uniqueness, while identifying his personal ambitions with the destiny of the nation lying at his feet.

Romanticism was a literary movement and a change of heart, rather than a philosophy. Its counterpart in systematic thought was constructed by the Hegelian dialectic. Hegel took charge of Universal Reason, emaciated to a ghost by its treatment at the hands of Kant, and clad it with the warm flesh of history. Declared incompetent to judge historic action, reason was given the comfortable position of

being imminent in history. An ideal situation: "Heads you lose, tails I win." Identified with the stronger battalions, reason became invincible; but unfortunately also redundant.

The next step was therefore quite naturally the complete disestablishment of reason. Marx and Engels decided to turn the Hegelian dialectic upside down. No longer should the tail pretend to wag the dog. The bigger battalions should be recognized as makers of history in their own right, with reason as a mere apologist to justify their conquests.

The story of this last development is well known. Marx reinterpreted history as the outcome of class conflicts, which arise from the need of adjusting "the relations of production" to "the forces of production." Expressed in ordinary language this says that as new technical equipment becomes available from time to time, it is necessary to change the order of property in favor of a new class, which is invariably achieved by overthrowing the hitherto favored class. Socialism, it was said, brings these violent changes to a close by establishing the classless society. The first formulation of this doctrine in the *Communist Manifesto* already places the "eternal truths, such as Freedom, Justice, etc."—which it mentions in these terms—in a very doubtful position. Since these ideas are supposed to have always been used only to soothe the conscience of the rulers and bemuse the suspicions of the exploited, there is no clear place left for them in the classless society. Today it has become apparent that there is indeed nothing in the realm of ideas, from law and religion to poetry and science, from the rules of football to the composition of music, that cannot be readily interpreted by Marxists as a mere product of class interest.

Meanwhile the legacy of Romantic nationalism, developing on parallel lines, was also gradually transposed into materialistic terms. Wagner and the Valhalla no doubt affected Nazi imagery; Mussolini gloried in recalling imperial Rome. But the really effective idea of Hitler and Mussolini was their classification of nations into *have's* and *have-not's* on the model of Marxian class war. The actions of nations were in this view not determined, nor capable of being judged, by right or wrong. Those in possession preached peace and the sacredness of international law, since the law sanctioned their holdings. But of course this code was unacceptable to virile nations, left empty handed; they would rise and overthrow the degenerate capitalistic democracies who had become the dupes of their pacific ideology, originally intended only to bemuse the underdogs. And so the text of Fascist and National Socialist foreign policy ran on, exactly on the lines of a Marxism applied to class war between nations.

Indeed, already by the opening of the twentieth century, influential German writers had fully refashioned the nationalism of Fichte and Hegel on the lines of a power-political interpretation of history. Romanticism had been brutalized and brutality romanticized, until the product was as tough as Marx's own historic materialism.

We have here the final outcome of the Continental cycle of thought. The self-destruction of liberalism, which was kept in a state of suspended logic in the Anglo-American field of Western civilization, was here brought to its ultimate conclusion. The process of replacing moral ideals by philosophically less vulnerable objectives was carried out in all seriousness. This is not a mere pseudo-substitution, but a *real* substitution of reason and the ideals of man by human appetites and human passions.

This brings us right up to the scene of the revolutions of the twentieth century. We can see now how the philosophies which guided these revolutions and destroyed liberty wherever they prevailed were originally justified by the antiauthoritarian and skeptical formula of liberty. They were indeed antiauthoritarian and skeptical to the extreme. They set man free from obligations towards truth and justice, reducing reason to its own caricature: to a mere rationalization of conclusions, predetermined by desire, and eventually to be secured, or already held, by force. Such was the final measure of this liberation: man was to be recognized henceforth as maker and master, and no longer servant of what had before been his ideals.

This liberation, however, destroyed the very foundations of liberty. If thought and reason are nothing by themselves, then it is meaningless to demand that thought be set free. The boundless hopes which the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century attached to the overthrow of authority and to the pursuit of doubt, were hopes attached to the release of reason. They firmly believed—to use Jefferson's majestic vocabulary—in "truths that are self-evident," which would guard "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," under governments "deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." They relied on these truths, which they trusted to be inscribed on the hearts of men, for establishing peace and freedom among men everywhere. The assumption of universal standards of reason was implicit in the hopes of the Enlightenment, and the philosophies which denied the existence of such standards denied therefore the foundations of all these hopes.

But it is not enough to show how a logical process, starting from an inadequate formulation of liberty, led to philosophic conclusions that

contradicted liberty. I have yet to show that this contradiction was actually put into operation; that these conclusions were not merely entertained and believed to be true, but met people prepared to act upon them. If ideas cause revolutions, they can only do so through people who will act upon them. If my account of the fall of liberty in Europe is to be satisfactory, I must be able to show that there were people who actually transformed philosophic error into destructive human action.

Of such people we have ample documentary evidence among the intelligentsia of Central and Eastern Europe. We may describe them as Nihilists.

There is an interesting ambiguity in the connotations of the word "nihilism," which at first may seem confusing, but actually turns out to be illuminating. Remember Rauschning's interpretation of the National Socialist upheaval in his book *Germany's Revolution of Nihilism*. As against this, reports from Central Europe often speak of widespread nihilism, meaning a lack of public spirit, the apathy of people who believe in nothing. This curious duality of nihilism, which makes it a byword both for complete self-centeredness and violent revolutionary action, can be traced to its earliest origins. The word was popularized by Turgenev in his *Fathers and Sons,* written in 1862. His prototype of nihilism, the student Bazarov, is an extreme individualist without any interest in politics. Nor does the next similar figure of Russian literature, Dostoyevsky's Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* (1866), show any political leanings. What Raskolnikov is trying to find out is why he should not murder an old woman if he wanted her money. Both Bazarov and Raskolnikov are experimenting privately with a life of total disbelief. But already a few years later we see the nihilist transformed into a political conspirator. The terrorist organization of the Narodniki—or populists—had come into being. Dostoyevsky portrayed the new type in his later novel, *The Possessed.* The nihilist now appears as an ice-cold businesslike conspirator, closely prefiguring the ideal Bolshevik as I have seen him represented on the Moscow stage in the didactic plays of the early Stalin period. Nor is the similarity accidental. For the whole code of conspiratorial action—the cells, the secrecy, the discipline and ruthlessness—known as the Communist method today, was taken over by Lenin from the "Populists." Proof of this can be found in articles published by him in 1901.

English and American people find it difficult to understand nihilism, for most of the doctrines professed by nihilists have been current among themselves for some time without turning those who held

them into nihilists. Great solid Bentham would not have disagreed with any of the views expounded by Turgenev's prototype of nihilism, the student Bazarov. But while Bentham and other skeptically minded Englishmen may use such philosophies merely as a mistaken explanation of their own conduct, which in actual fact is determined by their traditional beliefs, the nihilist Bazarov and his kind take such philosophies seriously and try to live by their light.

The nihilist who tries to live without any beliefs, obligations, or restrictions stands at the first, the private, stage of nihilism. He is represented in Russia by the earlier type of intellectual described by Turgenev and the younger Dostoyevsky. In Germany we find nihilists of this kind growing up in large numbers under the influence of Nietzsche and Stirner; and later, between 1910 and 1930, we see emerging in direct line of their succession the great German *Jugendbewegung*, with its radical contempt for all existing social ties.

But the solitary nihilist is unstable. Starved of social responsibility, he is liable to be drawn into politics, provided he can find a movement based on nihilistic assumptions. Thus, when he turns to public affairs, he adopts a creed of political violence. The cafes of Munich, Berlin, Vienna, Prague, and Budapest, where writers, painters, lawyers, doctors had spent so many hours of amusing speculation and gossip, thus became in 1918 the recruiting grounds for the "armed bohemians," whom Heiden in his book on Hitler describes as the agents of the European Revolution, just as the Bloomsbury of the unbridled twenties unexpectedly turned out numerous disciplined Marxists around 1930.

The conversion of the nihilist from extreme individualism to the service of a fierce and narrow political creed is the turning point of the European revolution. The downfall of liberty in Europe consisted in a series of such individual conversions.

Their mechanism deserves closest attention. Take firstly conversion to Marxism. Historic materialism had all the attractions of a second Enlightenment—taking off and carrying on from the first anti-religious Enlightenment, and offering the same intense mental satisfaction. Those who accepted its guidance felt suddenly initiated to the real forces actuating men and operating in history; to a reality that had hitherto been hidden to them and still remained hidden to the unenlightened, by a veil of deceit and self-deceit. Marx and the whole materialistic movement of which he formed part, had turned the world right way up before their eyes, revealing to them the true springs of human behavior.

Marxism offered them also a future bearing unbounded promise to

humanity. It predicted that historic necessity would destroy an antiquated form of society and replace it by a new one, in which the existing miseries and injustices would be eliminated. Though this prospect was put forward as a purely scientific observation, it endowed those who accepted it with a feeling of overwhelming moral superiority. They acquired a sense of righteousness, which in a paradoxical manner was fiercely intensified by the mechanical framework in which it was set. Their nihilism had prevented them from demanding justice in the name of justice, or humanity in the name of humanity; these words were banned from their vocabulary and their minds closed to these concepts. But silenced and repressed, their moral aspirations found an outlet in the scientific prediction of a perfect society. Here was set out a scientific Utopia relying for its fulfillment only on violence. Nihilists could accept, and would eagerly embrace, such a prophecy, which required from its disciples no other belief than that in the force of bodily appetites and yet the same time satisfied their most extravagant moral hopes. Their sense of righteousness was thus reinforced by a calculated brutality, born of scientific self-assurance. There emerged the modern fanatic, bristling with deadly skepticism.

The power of Marxism over the mind is based here on a process exactly the inverse of Freudian sublimation. The moral needs of man which are denied expression in terms of human ideals are injected into a system of naked power, to which they impart the force of a blind moral passion. With some qualification the same is true of the appeal of National Socialism to the mind of German youth. By offering them an interpretation of history in the materialistic terms of international class war, Hitler mobilized their sense of civic obligation which would not respond to humane ideals. It was a mistake to regard the Nazi as an untaught savage. His bestiality was carefully groomed by speculations closely reflecting Marxian influence. His contempt for humanitarian ideals had a century of philosophic schooling behind it. The Nazi disbelieves in public morality in the way we disbelieve in witchcraft. It is not that he has never heard of it, but that he thinks to have valid grounds to assert that such a thing cannot exist. If you tell him the contrary, he will think you peculiarly old-fashioned, or simply dishonest.

In such men, the traditional forms for holding moral ideals had been shattered and their moral passions were diverted into the only channels which a strictly mechanistic conception of man and society left open to them. We may describe this as a process of *moral inversion*. The morally inverted person has not merely performed a philosophic substitution of moral aims by material purposes, but is acting

with the whole force of his homeless moral passions within a purely materialistic framework of purposes.

There remains for me to describe the actual battlefield on which the conflict that led to the downfall of liberty in Europe was fought out. Let me approach the scene from the West. Towards the close of the Four Years' War, we hear from across the Atlantic the voice of Wilson appealing for a new Europe in terms of pure eighteenth century ideas. "What we seek," he summed up in his declaration of July 4, 1918, "is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind." When a few months later Wilson landed in Europe, a tide of boundless hope swept through its lands. They were the old hopes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, only much brighter than ever before.

Wilson's appeal and the response it evoked marked the high tide of the original moral aspirations of Enlightenment. It showed how, in spite of the philosophic difficulties which impaired the foundations of overt moral assertions, such assertions could in practice still be made as vigorously as ever in the regions of Anglo-American influence.

But the great hopes spreading from the Atlantic seaboard were contemptuously rejected by the nihilistic or morally inverted intelligentsia of Central and Eastern Europe. To Lenin, Wilson's language was a huge joke; from Mussolini or Goebbels it might have evoked an angry sneer. And the political theories which these men and their small circle of followers were mooting at the time were soon to defeat the appeal of Wilson and of democratic ideals in general. They were to establish within twenty years or so a comprehensive system of totalitarian governments over Europe, with a good prospect of subjecting the whole world to such government.

The sweeping success of Wilson's opponents was due to the greater appeal which their ideas made on a considerable section of the Central and Eastern nations. Admittedly, their final rise to power was achieved by violence, but not before they had gained sufficient support in every stratum of the population so that they could use violence effectively. Wilson's doctrines were first defeated by the superior convincing power of opposing philosophies, and it is this new and fiercer Enlightenment that has continued ever since to strike relentlessly at every humane and rational principle rooted in the soil of Europe.

The downfall of liberty which followed the success of these attacks everywhere demonstrates in hard facts what I had said before: that freedom of thought is rendered pointless and must disappear where reason and morality are deprived of their status as a force in their

own right. When the judge in court can no longer appeal to law and justice; when neither a witness, nor the newspapers, nor even a scientist reporting on his experiments, can speak the truth as he knows it; when in public life there is no moral principle commanding respect; when the revelations of religion and of art are denied any substance—then there are no grounds left on which any individual may justly make a stand against the rulers of the day. Such is the simple logic of totalitarianism. A nihilistic regime will have to undertake the day-to-day direction of all activities which are otherwise guided by the intellectual and moral principles that nihilism declares empty and void. Principles must be replaced by the decrees of an all-embracing "party line."

This is why modern totalitarianism, based on a purely materialistic conception of man, is of necessity more oppressive than an authoritarianism enforcing a spiritual creed, however rigid. Take the medieval church even at its worst. The authority of certain texts which it imposed remained fixed over long periods of time and their interpretation was laid down in systems of theology and philosophy, gradually developing over more than a millenium from St. Paul to Aquinas. A good Catholic was not required to change his convictions and reverse his beliefs at frequent intervals, in deference to the secret decisions of a handful of high officials. Moreover, since the authority of the Church was spiritual, it recognized other independent principles outside its own. Though it imposed numerous regulations on individual conduct, there were many parts of life left untouched and governed by other authorities—rivals of the Church—like kings, noblemen, guilds, corporations. And the power of all these was transcended by the growing force of law; while a good deal of speculative and artistic initiative was allowed to pulsate freely through this many-sided system.

The unprecedented oppressiveness of modern totalitarianism has become widely recognized on the Continent today and has gone some way towards allaying the feud between the fighters of liberty and the upholders of religion, which had been going on there since the first spread of Enlightenment. Anticlericalism is not dead, but many who recognize the transcendent obligations and are resolved to preserve a society built on the belief that such obligations are real have now discovered that they stand much closer to believers in the Bible and in the Christian revelation than to the nihilist regimes based on radical disbelief. History will perhaps record the Italian elections of April, 1948, as the turning point. The defeat inflicted there on the Communists by a large Catholic majority was hailed with immense relief by defenders of liberty throughout the world; by many who had been

brought up under Voltaire's motto, "Écrasez l'infame!" and had in earlier days voiced all their hopes in that battle cry.

It would seem to me that on the day when the modern skeptic first placed his trust in the Catholic Church to rescue his liberties against the Frankenstein monster of his own creation, a vast cycle of human thought has come full swing. The sphere of doubt has been circumnavigated. The critical enterprise which gave rise to the Renaissance and the Reformation, and started the rise of our science, philosophy, and art, has matured to its conclusion and has reached its final limits. We have begun to live in a new intellectual period, which I would call the post-critical age of Western civilization. Liberalism today is becoming conscious of its own fiduciary foundations and is forming an alliance with other beliefs kin to its own.

The instability of modern liberalism stands in curious contrast to the peacefully continued existence of intellectual freedom through a thousand years of antiquity. Why did the contradiction between liberty and skepticism never plunge the ancient world into a totalitarian revolution, like that of the twentieth century?

We may answer that once at least such a crisis did develop when a number of brilliant young men, whom Socrates had introduced to the pursuit of unfettered enquiry, blossomed out as leaders of the Thirty Tyrants. Men like Charmides and Kritias were nihilists, consciously adopting a political philosophy of smash-and-grab which they derived from their Socratic education; and as a reaction to this Socrates was impeached and executed.

Yet I think that these conflicts were never so fierce and far-reaching as the revolutions of the twentieth century. There was an element of passion lacking in antiquity: the prophetic passion of Christian Messianism. The ever unquenched hunger and thirst after righteousness which our civilization carries in its blood as a heritage of Christianity does not allow us to settle down in the Stoic manner of antiquity. Modern thought is a mixture of Christian beliefs and Greek doubts. Christian beliefs and Greek doubts are logically incompatible and the conflict between the two has kept Western thought alive and creative beyond precedent. But this mixture is an unstable foundation. Modern totalitarianism is a consummation of the conflict between religion and skepticism. It solves the conflict by embodying our heritage of moral passions in a framework of modern materialistic purposes. The conditions for such an outcome were not present in the age of antiquity, before Christianity had set alight new vast moral hopes in the heart of mankind.

THE IDEA OF A COLLEGE

Robert M. Hutchins

I SHOULD LIKE to try to make clear what I mean by a college and a college education. This I shall have to do chiefly by saying what I do *not* mean. Educational discussion in this country, like the discussion of everything else, is based on headlines. Hence it is possible for an educator who says he favors the abolition of football to be accused of being against health; if he says that the aim of a college is intellectual, the rumor will spread that he is against morals; if he says that he is against making the college either a vocational school or a place where the young are adjusted to their environment, he is charged with indifference to the fate of countless millions who have to make their own way in the world; if he says that he is for liberal education, the conclusion is that he is undemocratic. Yet a moment's reflection will show that none of the consequences assumed to follow from these positions actually does follow from them.

For example, big-time, industrial football, the symbol of the non-educational aspects of educational institutions, confuses the public mind about what education is and contains elements of injustice, hypocrisy, and fraud that run counter to the high ideals that our educational institutions profess. It is perfectly possible to be against football of this type and to be for health and exercise. As for me, I am for exercise, as long as I do not have to take any myself.

It is not the object of a college to make its students good, because the college cannot do it; if it tries to do it, it will fail; it will weaken the agencies that should be discharging this responsibility; and it will not discharge its own responsibility. It is possible to say this and still be for goodness. A college can make a highly important contribution to goodness by supplying the intellectual foundations of morality in an atmosphere conducive to the maintenance of good habits. But the family and the church have the main burden of inculcating and devel-

oping these habits. I may say in passing that I am for the family and the church.

A college should not aim to teach its students vocations, because going through vocational routines is too easy and lulls the conscience of a faculty that does not want to face the enormously difficult task of educating the young; because an educational institution cannot do a good job of vocational training; because the shifts in technology and the migration of workers may make vocational training at one time in one place useless at another time in another place; because jobs are easier and easier to do and require less and less training of any kind; and because the great problems of our time are the right use of leisure, the performance of the duties of citizenship, and the establishment of a community in this country and the world, to none of which vocational training makes the slightest contribution.

I shall never tire of telling the story of that Dean of Christchurch at Oxford who was asked by a student what was the use of studying Greek. The Dean replied, "It is not only the immediate language of the Holy Ghost, but it leads to positions of great dignity and emolument." The study of Greek now leads only to positions in the teaching of Greek, which, though of great dignity, are not of great emolument. It was a mistake to seek to justify Greek on the ground of its vocational value, for that has now disappeared. And in a world of rapid change the same fate may at any moment overtake any subject that is taught because of the emoluments achieved by those who have studied it in the past. It is possible to say this and at the same time feel concern for the economic future of college graduates. The question is not whether it is necessary to learn how to earn a living, but *where* it is desirable to learn it. In general the way to learn how to do anything is to do it; and industry is the place in which the young should learn how to work in industry.

A college should not seek to adjust its students to their environment, because it cannot tell what their environment will be. It cannot predict where they will live, or what social, economic, or political conditions will prevail when they have reached maturity. The world is now changing so fast that current information has little value because it will not remain current. What the father knows of the facts of life is almost useless to his son. If the present demand for instruction in current events succeeds, it can lead only to one result: it will fill the students with miscellaneous dead facts. The college that wishes to adjust its students to the environment is likely to teach facts miscellaneous in the highest degree, for adjustment to the environment may

mean anything, from how and when to dress for dinner to how and when to vote for president.

And certainly our object must be not merely to prepare our students for any possible environment, but also to induce and prepare them to try to get a better one. To do this they must chiefly have some standards of judgment, some idea of good and bad. If it is charged that the effort to prepare students to bring about a better environment will lead to a crop of maladjusted, neurotic youths, I reply that Socrates and Gandhi are worthy ideals for the rising generation, and that I have little fear that America will ever produce too many men of this type. The charge is in any case absurd, because I am urging nothing more than what is inherent in any democratic system, namely, that by the exercise of the intelligence of the population the community should struggle forward toward a better world. To struggle forward to a better world you have to know what kind of world would be better.

It is possible to say all this without being a reactionary, or a medievalist, or a theorist. In fact, if he will only think, the contemporary, practical, democrat will see that he cannot say anything else. The power we want our graduates to have is power in and over the unpredictable future. The power the college is best equipped to help them gain is intellectual power. It is the power of understanding and judgment.

The object of an educational system is to supply this power. It may, perhaps, do many other things that are interesting and useful; but it fails to the extent to which it fails to supply this power. Its contribution to the moral, physical, and spiritual natures of its students and to their "success" in the world are made by way of this power. No other agency in the community has the responsibility of supplying the intellectual power that the community requires. If the educational system does not discharge this responsibility, it will not be discharged.

In a democratic community every citizen should have as much power of understanding and judgment as he can develop, because every citizen has a voice in the management of the community. The progress, and even the safety, of a democratic community depends in part upon the intelligence of the citizens, and by this we cannot mean the intelligence of some citizens, but the combined intelligence of all. For this reason democrats since the earliest times have advocated universal free compulsory education.

In the last fifty years a remarkable reversal has taken place among democrats. They are still for universal free compulsory schooling.

They seem to feel that it would be undemocratic not to be. At the same time the demands of labor unions and the ambitions of parents have raised the school-leaving age to heights undreamed of by our democratic ancestors. As the President's Commission on Higher Education and the GI Bill of Rights suggest, the policy of this country is to the effect that schooling is a good thing, that being in school is better for everybody than being anywhere else, and that the more schooling everybody has the better everything will be. But the hordes of students let loose upon the educational system by reason of this policy, the difficulty of obtaining competent teachers to staff so vast an enterprise, and the great differences in the ability of pupils to get an education in any definition of it that our democratic ancestors would recognize have led some of the most vocal advocates of democracy to propose, in the name of democracy, the most undemocratic educational ideas.

For example, in the report of the President's Commission on Higher Education, presented by men who have the deepest democratic convictions, we are urged in the name of democracy upon a course that divides the population into the mass and the élite. The mass, we are told, since they are not really capable of being educated, should not be allowed to clutter up existing educational institutions, because they are not bright enough. Two-year community colleges will be established for them. They should go to these colleges because everybody should go to school as long as possible. But they should not be educated, because they are not capable of it. The two-year community college is therefore a kind of waiting room, or housing project, in which the young are to be kept out of worse places until we are ready to have them go to work.

Perhaps we need waiting rooms or housing projects for the young. Perhaps we need the mass equivalent of those girls' finishing schools of the last century in which young ladies were accommodated with genteel occupations in that difficult period between the time at which they reached physical maturity and the time at which they could get married. But it would be helpful if things were called by their right names. To call a waiting room or a housing project a college or an educational institution is to cheat the student and his parents and to confuse the public still further about what a college, or an educational institution, or an education is.

The doctrine that educational opportunity should be open to all is the great American contribution to the theory and practice of education. But you will notice that the opportunity that should be open to all is educational opportunity, not the opportunity to spend two years

doing anything that occurs to you in a place erroneously denominated a college. The advocates of the two-year community college either keep silent altogether about what its curriculum is to be or say that it is to be whatever the students would like to have it. This is based on the hypothesis, which I regard as wholly undemocratic, that these students cannot be educated, and therefore they might as well do anything they care to. It is assumed that their interests will be largely vocational and recreational. Hence those offerings of American universities which we have hitherto regarded as somewhat eccentric, offerings in tap dancing, embalming, cosmetology, and janitoring, would become the normal course of study in the community college.

Meanwhile it is supposed that those colleges and universities which now exist, freed of the burden of struggling with the vulgar mass, will go on educating the élite. It is suggested that the pre-existing colleges and universities will assist the community colleges by supplying them with teachers and administrators. This is of course fallacious, since the pre-existing colleges and universities are not prepared, and apparently do not intend to prepare, to turn out teachers of tap dancing, embalming, cosmetology, and janitoring.

The choice before us is clear: either we should abandon universal suffrage or we should give every citizen the education that is appropriate to free men. We cannot say that we are for democracy and at the same time protest the impossibility of preparing all the citizens to take their part in a democracy. In a democracy the people rule and are ruled in turn for the good life of the whole community. If democracy is to work, every citizen must have the education that rulers ought to have. If we do not know how to give every citizen this kind of education, we shall have to find out.

Liberal education is the education appropriate to free men. Since it originated at a time when only the few were rulers, it was originally an aristocratic education. Hence the deeply convinced democrats who wrote the report of the President's Commission assume that you cannot be a democrat and be for liberal education. They most undemocratically assume that the mass of the people are incapable of achieving a liberal education—but they have no evidence for this, because the mass of the people have never had an opportunity to achieve it. It is true that, as large numbers have come into the American educational system, education has deteriorated and liberal education has almost vanished. But this is the result of the indolence and inattention of educators rather than the ignorance and incapacity of students. To teach a boy who does not care about being educated how

to read, write, figure, and understand the ideas that have animated mankind is hard; it is far easier to forget that he is going to be a citizen and set him to learning, or to think he is learning, a trade.

We must applaud the notion of education for all; but we must deny that this ideal is achieved by having everybody in school. Everything turns on what is done there. To the extent to which the pupil is acquiring the power of understanding and judgment, to that extent he is being educated. It is impossible that too many people can be educated in this sense. We hear a great deal today about the dangers that will come upon us through the frustration of educated people who have got educated in the expectation that education will get them a better job, and who then fail to get it. But surely this depends on the representations that are made to the young about what education is. If we allow them to believe that education will get them better jobs and encourage them to get educated with this end in view, they are entitled to a sense of frustration if, when they have got the education, they do not get the jobs. But, if we say that they should be educated in order to be citizens, and that everybody, whether he is a ditch-digger or a bank president, should have this education because he is a citizen, then the ditch-digger may still feel frustrated, but not because of his education.

Nor is it possible for a person to have too much liberal education, because it is impossible to have too much understanding and judgment. But it is impossible to learn to understand and judge many important kinds of things in youth. The judgment and understanding of practical affairs can amount to little in the absence of experience with practical affairs. This indicates the limitations of formal, institutional, liberal education in youth. It indicates, in short, the limitations of a college. Subjects that cannot be understood without experience should not be taught to those who are without experience. Or, if these subjects are taught to those who are without experience, it should be clear that these subjects can be taught only by way of introduction and that their value to the student depends on his continuing to study them as he acquires experience. Such subjects as economics, ethics, politics, history, and literature may be studied by young people, but they cannot be comprehended by them. Young people may enjoy them, and they may get something from them, particularly from literature and history; but they cannot understand them, because the full lessons of these disciplines can be grasped only in maturity. The tragedy in this country is that these subjects are studied in youth and never studied again. Therefore, our college graduates never understand them. Yet these are the subjects which

in the present crisis the democratic citizen most urgently needs to understand.

The basic error is that of supposing that a college can give its students all the education they will ever need—that when they receive their degrees they are educated men and women and can stop worrying about getting educated. The effect of this on the college curriculum is to jam it with all kinds of courses representing the assumed needs of adults, without regard to whether or not a young person can comprehend them. A course in business, for example, is useless to a boy or girl who has never been in business. In the American tradition a businessman would never think of taking such a course; yet only to a businessman can such a course have value.

We are concerned here with the college and not with the education of adults; but we see that there is the most intimate relationship between the two. In fact the idea of a college depends upon our understanding this relationship. If we say that education is a process that is to go on chiefly or exclusively in youth, then we are likely to say that the object of the college is, as the cant phrase has it, to prepare for life. If we say that education is a process that must go on through life, then the object of the college is to give the student those habits, ideas, and techniques which he needs to continue to educate himself. Then the object of the college is to prepare the student for more education. In view of the impossibility of understanding the most important subjects in youth, the attempt to do more than initiate the educational process in youth is bound to fail in the most important respects.

I have said that the great problems of our time are the right use of leisure, the performance of the duties of citizenship, and the establishment of a community in this country and the world. The idea of a college that I have attempted to outline solves the problem of the use of our leisure by proposing that it should be used for the continuation of education in adult life. The idea of a college that I have outlined tries to solve the problem of the duties of citizenship by proposing that the college help its students to develop the intellectual powers of understanding and judgment in so far as it is possible to develop them in youth. I must now say a final word about the contribution of the college to the establishment of a community in this country and the world.

The college should have a common curriculum, prescribed for all the students. The common prescribed curriculum is at least a partial answer to those who say that a large fraction of the population cannot achieve a liberal education and must be relegated, for this reason, to

vocational training. The elective system deprives the student of one of the greatest contributions that could be made to his education, namely, the contribution of his fellow students. Under a common prescribed course of study the education of the student proceeds through discussion with his fellow students throughout his waking hours; under the elective system it goes on only when he is in class, for it is an accident if he finds another student who is following the same program with whom he can discuss it. The disintegration of the course of study under the elective system, popularly called the "enrichment" of the curriculum, has impoverished the colleges by depriving them of any common intellectual life. Extra-curriculum activities have achieved their exaggerated importance partly because the students have only these activities in common. So an undergraduate of a great university wrote to the student newspaper not long ago and complained that the curriculum of the University had now reached such richness that one student could not talk to another unless they both happened to remember the score of last Saturday's game.

The accomplishments of college students under a common prescribed course of study are amazing to those accustomed to the listless performance that is the normal reaction of the young to the dreary fragments of the elective system. The multiplication of the power of the student is such that those who have seen it are entitled to say that it is possible to give the whole population a liberal education.

We cannot hope to build a community, collegiate, national, or international, without understanding. Of course we may not have a community even if we do have understanding, for men may determine to shoot one another even if they do understand one another. We cannot hope for agreement on all the important issues of life. We must have *faith,* however, that understanding will minimize the areas of disagreement and moderate the passions of those who disagree. A common training that leads to a common understanding would appear to be the most promising foundation of a community of any kind. Hence our democratic ancestors established the common schools.

The advance of specialization in the last seventy-five years has brought with it great gains and great losses. The gains are more spectacular, but the losses are more important. The gains have come chiefly in our power over nature. The losses have come in our power to control ourselves and understand one another. Unfortunately we have recently discovered that we cannot be trusted to use our power over nature wisely unless we can control ourselves and understand

one another. Specialized education has now reduced us all to the level of students who cannot talk together unless they both happen to remember the score of last Saturday's game. The human community has been split in a billion fragments, which the cults of nationalism, racism, or regionalism are constantly re-forming into more and more dangerous combinations.

The responsibilities of the United States are heavier than they have ever been. No one would claim that they are being discharged. The misery and anguish of the world are intensified by that overhanging fear which the United States was the first to let loose upon the earth. There are no simple-minded solutions—the most simple-minded and the most irresponsible is that to which we seem committed, namely, that overwhelming force is the answer to every question. Military power is important if it enables you to do something to somebody else that he cannot do to you at about the same time to about the same extent. The day of military power ended when the Russians exploded their first atomic bomb; for then it became impossible for us to exert such power without suffering irreparable damage ourselves.

Now at last we shall have to think. Now, if we have the power of understanding and judgment, we shall have to show it. Now we must have intelligent citizens who know how to rule and be ruled in turn for the good life of the whole community. Now we must apply ourselves to the task of creating a community in this country and then throughout the world. The education that will help us toward these ends is liberal education, the education of free men. This education is the task of the college.

THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE IN OUR POLITICAL WORLD

Helmut Kuhn

Vladimir Soloviev's *Brief Tale of the Antichrist,* published in 1900, the year of the writer's death, deserves to be reread in the year 1950. It predicts a succession of destructive wars of global scope of which by now we have witnessed two. It also predicts attempts at a global federation of which two have been actually made in our lifetime. But in Soloviev the league of nations is disastrously successful. A world state is created. The Society for Peace discontinues its work, for its purpose is accomplished. The pacified and united nations elect a monarch, a new Roman Emperor. By the consent of parliaments, in a strictly democratic manner, the Antichrist becomes the ruler of the world.

Compared with the stature of Soloviev's Antichrist the Mussolinis, Hitlers, and Stalins appear small fry. Although of obscure and even discreditable origin, he is a man of great and noble ideas. His fame is based on a publication of his, revealing a project of unprecedented boldness. Its materialization is to secure to mankind peace, order and welfare. But unlike the schemes of former utopians and moralists it does not exact the price of conversion. Everyone is allowed to stay just what he is. Kant anticipated this philosophy by suggesting that, with the right legal-political order devised and established, the state would work even though it be composed of devils. What is needed is "some sort of original, creative social invention," a desperate believer in saving shrewdness recently proclaimed (Journal of Philosophy, XLVI, 160). The Antichrist is the eagerly awaited creative social inventor. He, the shrewdest of the shrewd, wins power through persuasion rather than through violence.

The greatness of Soloviev's hero is marred by a flaw. He loves himself immoderately, fanatically. The pivot on which all his beneficial

projects turn is his own person. But separated from his Creator man is the Nothing out of which he like other things has been made. So self-love will bring the lover face to face with Nothingness. This experience, the Encounter with Nothingness, is the crisis of the inner history of the Antichrist which is the indispensable prelude to his outward history, his rise to power. In describing this crisis the Russian apocalyptic writer, who was unacquainted with Kierkegaard, uses an imagery which in the meantime has become familiar to us through Kierkegaard and his modern followers.

The antagonist of Christ, wandering through a wild forest (we remember Dante's *selva selvaggia*), arrives at a yawning abyss. The anguish of Nothingness is upon him. At this moment he shows the great valor which is the mark of the princely man of fate—that dauntlessness which is exalted by Nietzsche as the fortitude which enables man to sustain Nothingness, the counter-virtue to humility. The two forms of fortitude, the mock-virtue and the genuine virtue, resemble each other closely. Both are wrested from fear, the one as an achievement, the other as a gift. Christ's temptation in the desert is reenacted in reverse. Through this test the Antichrist wins his title—which is also the title of the lord of this world. Like Adrian Leverkuhn in Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus,* he makes a pact with the devil. By virtue of this pact Adrian wins power over the mind through music, and Soloviev's hero wins power over society through persuasion. At this moment the Great Confusion begins. The choir of the angels blends with the song of the infernal host. The bringer of peace and justice is the enemy of man and the perverter of love.

The dictatorial master plan worked so well that most people came to regard Christianity as outmoded and useless. The masses deserted the churches, but those who stayed faithful increased in fervor. While the united peoples sang the praise of their new overlord, the Christians—Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant—kept aloof, striking a discordant note amidst universal concord. At the same time, the three great divisions of Christendom moved closer to each other in brotherly understanding.

It is the bane of modern dictatorship as distinguished from ancient tyranny that it must fear the dissenter even more than the rebel. The rule is borne out by Soloviev's Antichrist. Unable to tolerate the Christian dissent, he resorts once more to the art of persuasion. He promises religious freedom (how familiar this sounds to us), and the award of long coveted privileges. All he demands in return is the recognition of himself—this beloved self—as the head of Christendom. Many are persuaded. But the remnant, gathered around their leaders,

stand firm. Then the final conflict breaks out. The confusion gives way to the clear opposition of God's faithful people to His enemies. At long last a humanly unbearable clarity, the light of *dies illa,* dispels the penumbra of history. Christ, seated on the throne of judgment, allows time to flow into eternity. So far the apocalyptic writer.

Several lessons are to be learned from Soloviev's story. The Christian conscience is wounded by the afflictions of this our age, so bloody, so ruthless, so ingenious in the arts of destruction, and so impotent in the works of peace that it recalls the calamities and scourges of the worst periods of history. And the present horrors surpass even those of former ages by the number of victims and geographical scope. To a searching examination the descent into the present misery may reveal itself as a slow and gradual process. But to most of us it came as a shattering blow, hurling mankind from the imaginary height to which enlightenment and progress had lifted it, and there is some truth also in this superficial view. The beginning of the sharp descent can be marked on the calendar: the fourth of August, 1914. The inability to restore Europe to health after the devastation wrought by the First World War paved the way for fresh catastrophes. Hitler emerged, the genuine son of war, defeat, and chaos, and Germany's imperial dream came true—as a diabolic parody of itself. The war to wipe out this final disgrace might have been fought as a crusade, and it was actually started in this spirit by England. But the postwar policy of the Allies, too long a continuation of the war against the defeated enemy, gave the lie to their ideals. To the list of colossal atrocities a new item was added: the mass expulsion of some twelve millions of Germans from their East European homeland. While the nations of the Western World engaged in fratricidal struggle, Stalin's Russia, no less terrible and oppressive a dictatorship than Hitler's, developed into a power second in strength only to America. Surely it was not the Four Freedoms proclaimed by the Atlantic Charter which triumphed in the victory of 1945.

The Christian conscience has the idea of a community of love for its norm. As we measure our political world by this norm, we do not simply find it wanting here and there. It rather defies this norm throughout. It was Cain who, according to Jewish myth, first "builded a city" (Genesis 4:17), and the City of Man in our time is a single commentary on the philosophy implied by this laconic observation. Whether we look at the Fascists or anti-Fascists, the Bolsheviks or capitalists, the white people or the yellow people, nations of the East or the West—on all hands occasion is offered to remember the lamentation of the Psalmist: "They are all gone aside, they

are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Ps. 14:3.)

Assertions such as the preceding ones may well be true. But it is a most vulnerable truth which they dare to express. Who can utter them without sounding presumptuous even though he may include himself in his sweeping indictment? But this is not merely a matter of taste. The prophetic harshness of the words in the Fourteenth Psalm effect a terrible leveling. All distinctions of worth within the historical scene disappear and with them any justification for taking sides. The one who adopts the prophetic judgment as his own condemns himself to inaction. The only alternative to inaction would be an action adequate to the prophetic judgment, i.e., prophetic action, or rather, since this is not actually available, that pseudo-prophetic action which we call revolution. For clarity's sake we should add: "absolute" revolution. For we refer here to a violent action designed not merely to change existing political institutions and relations of power but to set an end, once and for all, to the state of affairs regnant throughout previous history—the Marxist and anarchist idea of revolution. If the corruption is total and universal, the healing destruction must be equally radical.With the determination for action on the basis of total rejection, the mind suffers its Luciferic fall. Prophetic indignation becomes an incentive to violent destruction. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" (Is. 14:12.)

At this point a modification is in order, and it is Soloviev's story that suggests this word of caution. The radical action which springs from rejection may take on a form which conceals its radicalism as well as its destructiveness. Such is the case in the tale of the Antichrist. A device to make pacifism work—could any idea be more sane, more constructive, and less revolutionary? But the radicalism, though hidden, is present. For the first time in history man is to take the fate of human society in his own hands. A blueprint is drawn up, and by methods which he has developed in building machines the social engineer sets about building a universal society. Through technocracy a nonviolent but nonetheless absolute revolution can be brought on. Those who believe in the saving power of a "creative social invention" are no less revolutionary in their thinking than the self-avowed champions of world revolution.

Total rejection, taken out of the mouth of the prophet, appropriated by the despairing individual and applied to his historical situation, may increase the offenses which it condemns. The truth of the Christian conscience is parlous in addition to being vulnerable. What, then, is the place of the Christian conscience in the historical

world? Once more Soloviev's story suggests an answer, and this answer is in keeping with the teaching of Christianity through the centuries.

The Russian visionary does base his story on the Christian conscience, that is to say on the idea of a society held together by love rather than by force. But the situation which he evokes, instead of belonging in history proper, is a meta-historical one. The drama of the Antichrist shows history at the moment of its passing into non-history. The Christian conscience, we are made to understand, is not unrelated to history—far from it. First and foremost, however, it is related through history to the end of history. The Sermon on the Mount opens the terrestrial and historical prospect towards a celestial and eschatological horizon. This sermon must be listened to in the city of man by rulers and citizens alike. Yet it is not designed for the city of man. There has never been, there is not, and there will never be a Christian state. The very idea is unthinkable. When Thomas More, humanist and Christian, developed his scheme of a best state, called Utopia, he wisely based it on the Platonic virtues, wisdom, temperance, fortitude, and justice, leaving out of account hope, faith, and love. And what a contemporary of ours, T. S. Eliot, calls a Christian society, is strictly speaking no Christian society at all. It is a society in whose culture Christianity plays a dominant part. But this is a different matter.

To the Attic philosophers justice was "all virtues in one." Far from being innovators they adopted this conviction as expressing the ancestral wisdom of their people. Taught by two centuries of Hellenic *polis* life, they discovered the architectonic structure of both man's terrestrial life and the life of the body politic. The two, they understood, are inseparable from each other: the order of the soul and the order of the city are mutually interdependent. The former can exist without the latter only through a divinely ordained exception, whereas the latter can under no conditions exist without the former. The Kantian idea of a well-ordered city of malefactors would justly have seemed to these philosophers as bespeaking ignorance of a fundamental law—the law of correspondence between the individual, a microcosm, and the social macrocosm, the state.

Reason must be put in control in order to reduce the germinant chaos of our cupidities to a *cosmos,* i.e., a "fair order." Through persuasion and not through violence must this creative rulership be set up and maintained in the soul of the wise and just (who will also be brave and temperate), and likewise in the just society. The doctrine of the Human Good, or ethics, which thus results has its habitat

entirely in history. The good as defined by this ethics provides the indispensable though not the sufficient condition for the glorious flowering of a blessed life (*eudaimonia*) in this world of ours. And again this is equally true of the city as it is of the individual. There is no Christian state, we affirm once more, and add now the further assertion: there is no perfectly just state. Yet every existing state is just "to a certain degree," and by approximation this degree can be determined for every particular case. As we apply the norm of justice to some concrete society and assert, for example, that Hitler's National Socialist state fell particularly short of the norm (even what seemed persuasion became violence: a form of coercive propaganda) we do not merely pass a "moral judgment." The statement, if true to the spirit of the theory of the Human Good, resembles rather the diagnosis of a physician. The remoteness from the norm removes the foundations on which social order rests. An unjust state can be vehement in action but it cannot be strong. It is doomed by its injustice, though the sentence will rarely be executed with the terrible swiftness with which it overtook Hitler's and Mussolini's work.

The principle of excellence and the principle of life, both in individual existence and in society, are one and the same. This identification furnishes the premise of a study of the good as the constructive principle of historical life. That generation follow upon generation, that each of them fit itself into the legal pattern which the wisdom of the elders has designed but which ultimately rests on the nature of things themselves, their innate hierarchical order, that justice be done and all members of the community be given their share in the available goods, that finally the terrestrial city become a Happy City—this is the object of concern. So much is the truth which this doctrine embodies a truth for life in history that it suffered a transfer from the small polis, the city-state, to the empire without losing its efficacy. Hellenic justice and Latin legality became fused in the Roman citizen, the figure whose presence and power raised the Roman Empire above the despotic rival empires which it had defeated.

The truth of the doctrine of justice as the human-civic good is so much a truth for all history and so little out of date that it has a better claim to the name of "political science" than the empirical study of forms of government and the political technology which developed in the wake of Machiavelli. Nor are the principles of this doctrine completely forgotten in the deliberations of contemporary statesmen and the judgments which we are accustomed to pass upon the events and deeds of our time—they are too much in the nature of things to be completely disregarded. But since the doctrine as doctrine, as an

organized body of knowledge, has fallen into desuetude, its *disjecta membra* are variously put in operation as the pronouncements of "common sense," "sense of fairness," or "sense of justice." This unprincipled use of principles makes them operate in an unintelligent, haphazard, and intermittent way. It is unfavorable to the development of the statesman (no master without an "art," i.e., a body of principles, through which and over which mastery can be attained), and in his place it promotes the dilettante who is, at best, a man of genius, at worst, a demagogue. In action it leads to bewildering contradictions, to a wavering between incompatible positions, almost to some kind of schizophrenia. Vast and generous principles are proclaimed. For it is natural that a mind not disciplined to think on the level of principles should, on the spur of a challenging moment, rush blindly to the largest generalities. The classic illustration is the declaration of the Four Freedoms, which shows all the treacherous buoyancy of an after-dinner speech. Then, in a second phase, under the pressure of the concrete situation, expediency and passion will have full sway as, for example, in the Potsdam Agreement of 1945. But the cynicism of the second phase will not prevent the nobler intentions from being remembered at some later date and given a limited and belated effectiveness. In the loud dispute between idealism and power, political wisdom is silenced.

"Ye must be born again." With this demand Christ brought into existence the "Christian conscience," the conscience whose perpetual disquietude is the birth pangs of the "new creature." The newness of life, however, is not in and for history—not, at any rate, according to its fundamental meaning. It is not a more perfect state nor greater welfare of the people nor more exacting standards of personal conduct. All this, and much more than this, should follow as symptoms and consequences, but the essence of the new life is of a different nature. The community of love in which this life reaches its fulfillment is not actualized in history except in vestiges and by approximation. It is a "Kingdom" and that means that it requires the power and presence of the king on the one hand and the loyal affection of the subjects on the other. The king must be with his people and the people must confess him. And this kingdom, the City of God, is "not of this world." It lies beyond history.

Is this a harsh saying to ears accustomed to the "social gospel"? At any rate, it is Christ's saying. The conscience to which it appeals is emptied in its inner court of the grave and solemn concern which animates Greek wisdom and the doctrine of justice. It does not look to the fate of society, the maintenance of political order, the thriving

or progress of culture. It looks beyond all this to the end of all these things. In its core it is an expectant conscience (*ein harrendes Gewissen*), placed in an eschatological rather than an historical horizon. Whenever the craving beyond history gives way to an adaptation to this world as to man's true homestead, the Christian conscience becomes somnolent, and other cravings will get the upper hand.

In looking beyond history the Christian conscience is not blind to history. On the contrary, historical consciousness, so marked a feature of modern thinking as compared to the thinking of earlier centuries and especially of Greek antiquity, is in fact, as has been frequently observed, a Christian heritage. It is the result of a secularization of *Heilsgeschichte* (history of salvation) into *Weltgeschichte* (world history). Only to the anxious and longing expectation of the end of history does history as directed toward its end become visible—history as the total drama of human events, "world history" in the strict sense. The doctrine of justice is in and for history, but only the Christian conscience knows of history, through withdrawal from it. History so known has a meaning, but one that is not in history. It is, therefore, amenable to "mystic" divination only and not to pragmatic interpretation. A philosophy of history conceived as the construction of the meaning of world history is a will-o'-the-wisp.

The Christian conscience, though brought into existence by a historical fact, the life, teaching, and death of Christ, is securely founded upon a trans-historical norm. Consequently, its relation to the historical world, the powers that be, will vary with the changes of the historical situation. These variations, however, will take place within the limits set by the dual nature of the Christian conscience: its being fundamental to historic-political order (love is the life of justice) on the one hand, and its being directed toward a trans-historical fulfillment on the other. The world cannot be without the Christian conscience, but the conscience cannot be without the world. In fact, it becomes itself only through divesting itself of the world. While living in the world it is not of the world. Because of this dual nature of the Christian conscience, the worldly success of Christianity is an ambiguous fact. Taking worldly success for a standard, the historian may record two great triumphs of Christianity in the modern world. In the early fifteenth century the Cross was carried across the ocean to a new continent, and in the nineteenth century missionary work boasted a larger number of converts than all former efforts had been able to net. Yet in a more significant sense the two periods mark two catastrophes: the Great Schism and the victory of secularism. Again Soloviev's *Tale of the Antichrist* imparts a memorable lesson. As the

hour of decision draws near, the church loses ground, the number of its members decreases, and the Christians become again what they were at the time of the early church: a people by themselves, clearly marked off from the rest of mankind.

"Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's." This dominical saying brings into sharp focus the meaning of the "in the world, not of the world." At the same time, it allows for a considerable latitude, and here the variations in the nature of worldly power come into play. Of the extremes between which the pendulum swings one is defined by St. Paul's "no power but of God" (Rom. 13:1), the other by St. Peter's "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). Loyal and even enthusiastic co-operation may be demanded, making of the Christian a better rather than a worse citizen than the unbeliever. At times, however, disarmed resistance will be necessary, and there is no easy rule by which the two situations with their contradictory demands can be told from each other. Not without great anxiety and much heart searching shall we ever admit that we are confronted with the latter situation, the one that imposes upon us the awful duty of "civil disobedience." For only by a hair's breadth is the martyr separated from the rebel. Both figures are adorned with the crown of suffering, and their similarity puts the Christian conscience to test. When it fails, the Great Confusion will close down upon it.

However wide the range of possible attitudes which the Christian conscience allows, two possibilities are clearly at variance with its fundamental demands. Never and under no conditions can it countenance either an authoritarian creed or a revolutionary consciousness. In both cases it surrenders its reference to a trans-historical norm and becomes submerged in history, identifying its demands, in the first case, with the demands of "the powers that be," in the second case with the demands of "the powers that are to be." So it suffers degradation from a loving consciousness to a love-hating consciousness. It thereby forfeits its characteristic dual relation to history—as a creative consciousness (creative of order) and, at the same time, as a disturbed and critical consciousness, critical of every existing order.

There is no easy rule by which to recognize the emergency which forces the conscience to resist. Although every power be "ordained by God," the exercise of power is invariably tainted by lust for power. There is cause for vigilance throughout. But by what token can we identify the moment at which not only a partial contradiction (this is present at all times) but an irreconcilable conflict arises between God's word and man's word?

The signal for the beginning of the open conflict is given in Solo-

viev's story by the emperor's demand that the churches recognize him as their head. The claim to this headship has been latent in his rulership from its inception, and when he finally comes out with this demand the decision is at hand. The argument in favor of acceptance is that the formal recognition would make very little if any difference to the inner life of the church while it would brighten the prospects of its outward life as an institution. Yet this is a lying argument. Christ alone is the head of His church, and acquiescence in the emperor's claim would be an act of defection. Far from leaving intact the inner life of the church it would utterly pervert it. The name of Christ would serve as a cover for the worship of the Antichrist.

This idea of a signal for conflict, claim countered by claim, is in keeping with both the principles and the history of Christianity. The early Christians prepared to become good citizens and loyal subjects of the Roman emperor. They resisted when the emperor advanced his religious claims. Then the *Adventus Christi* stood against the *Adventus Augusti,* the "peace on earth" as a premonition of the eternal Jerusalem against *Pax Romana,* gift of the "eternal Rome"—the Christian conscience against the world.

In our time it is the totalitarian state that makes a religious claim on its subjects, thus pitting once more the word of man against the word of God. A *Weltanschauung,* i.e., a credo concerning the principles which should guide us in living our lives, is adopted as a political maxim and enforced with the help of the police. And since in the modern secular state the allegiance to ultimate principles is the secret of the individual, a police entrusted with the task of enforcing a credo must be a "secret police." Furthermore, the same police force must be empowered to set at naught the law courts by establishing places of confinement for the new criminal, inevitably called into existence by the new state—the dissenter, that living contradiction to the dictatorial gospel, the No opposed to the great affirmations of the New Rome. The police becomes God on earth, the symbol of the enslaved conscience, and an officially promoted leader worship contributes the element of personal devotion which the blueprints of the New Reich or the Communist society fail to enlist.

The totalitarian state will find it expedient to tolerate Christianity or even to play its protector. On this point too, as the experience of the Christian churches under Nazi and Bolshevik rule shows, Soloviev's forecast has proved correct. The price to be paid by the church for this protection will be asked for so tactfully, the concessions to be made will seem so trifling—a few omissions in speech and deed, some prudent discretion in matters of publicity, some wise flexibility in

matters of appointments, some evidence of generous good will in promoting the goals pursued by the government—so insignificant all this will seem that the appeaser, with much show of justice, may ask: what harm can this do to us? The signature affixed to the document of submission is written with invisible ink. Time breathes upon it, and the avowal of betrayal, penned in bold lettering, stares us in the face. Hitler found a party within the church, the so-called *Deutsche Christen,* willing to recognize the coming of the Third Reich as a new act of divine revelation, and theological faculties ready to put the seal of ecclesiastic approval upon his racial laws, the prelude to the massacre of Jews. The Orthodox hierarchy under Bolshevik rule follows these precedents, and as yet its submissiveness appears to be unredeemed by a resistance movement.

Hitler did not succeed in subjugating the Christian conscience. There were those who refused to put their signature to the pact of disloyalty. With this decision they chose martyrdom. Remembering the controversies of the years of the church struggle in Germany or perusing again the documents of the fight-declarations of principles, memoranda, pastoral letters, and the like, we may feel some disappointment. Too often the real issue is wrapped in a cloud of legal arguments, ambiguity and indirectness of expression hide the true intent, and assurances of loyalty make us doubtful about the stand taken by the speaker. It would be most unjust, however, to turn this disappointment into a reproach addressed to the leaders of that fight. Their language, it is true, was sometimes less than sincere. But this sacrifice of complete sincerity was imposed upon them by the necessity of continuing to deal with the Hitler government, even though under the form of protest. You cannot negotiate with the Antichrist once you have called him by his right name.

Not to the public controversies must we turn in order to hear the language of the Christian conscience at liberty, freed from politic caution, rejecting the claim of the human authority, and delivering itself up to God. We must rather listen to voices coming from underground, the proper place for the church under dictatorial rule. We must remember such documents as Theodor Haecker's diaries: the prayer of thanks offered by this man, as passionate a lover of his country as ever there was, on receiving the news of the rescue of the British army at Dunkirk, or Reinhold Schneider's poetic calls to repentance, circulated clandestinely in typewritten copies, and finding their way even to the prison cells of the convicted fighters of the German resistance. But the vigilance of the Gestapo confined the underground to a narrow margin of existence between life and death. There was an-

other place assigned to the freedom of the Christian conscience by Hitler himself: the concentration camp. Here sainthood and depravity lived side by side. Two kinds of outcasts were thrown together: martyrs and reprobates. In addition were the most numerous class, the victims who were given no choice in the matter and whose faces were ground down by the mechanical cruelty of the system.

The Christian conscience against the world—nobody can choose this position. It can only be suffered as laid upon us by an inexorable demand. And we cannot submit to this demand without the supplication: "Let this cup pass from us." For in accepting this position we must tread the road which one infinitely stronger than we trembled to take. The modern worshipers of man (they too must serve) have built their concentration camps into a new Calvary, revealed to the sufferer in an apocalyptic light. When in the spring of 1945 the Four Horsemen were at large in Germany and the plague broke out in vermin-infested Dachau, a priest, sent there by Hitler's hangmen for his Christian loyalty, jotted down his observations: "The crematorium can no longer catch up with death in burning the corpses. So the corpses must wait, stacked up in the barrack streets where everyone, sick or hale, has to pass. By and by they are collected and taken away for incremation, and wagon after wagon, each filled with naked dead, rolls away. . . . Out of the stack of the furnace thick smoke rises by day and night, and like a pall of fog the smell of burnt flesh hovers over the City of the Dead. . . . The dying will not end. 'How long, oh Lord?' This anguished question rises again and again out of the torture of the plague-ridden mass toward their sole Saviour: 'How long, oh Lord, how long?' "[1]

The Christian conscience against the world—here, amidst terrors, clarity reigns. Double talk, innuendos, the hiding behind biblical quotations, all the stratagems of the hounded man are dispensed with—he turns and faces his persecutors. Dr. Metzger, champion of Christian pacifism and the ecumenical movement, indited a letter to Hitler in which he urged the Führer to resign his position. He paid for his saintly follies with his freedom and, after a year of imprisonment, with his life. "In the name of Jesus Christ, I declare to you that you are murderers," Paul Schneider, a Protestant minister, inmate of Buchenwald, shouted in the face of his jailers when he heard that all the Jews in the camp had been killed.[2] Soon afterwards he succumbed to the tortures inflicted upon him by the prison guards.

[1] Konrad Hofman, Reinhold Schneider, Erik Wolf, *Sieger in Fesseln: Christuszeugnisse aus Lagern und Gefängnissen* (Freiburg, Herder, 1947), pp. 102–3.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 143.

The clarity, though deadly, becomes a source of joy. In the repor on experiences in concentration camps, filled though they are wit sorrow and terror, a note of rejoicing is audible. "The eight month of my preparation for eternity have been hard, but very beautiful a the same time," one of the martyrs wrote to his sister on the day o his execution.[3] The affliction is accepted as a grace, and humbly sul mitted to as a school of suffering. "Can you already go home? Hav you learnt your lesson?" the inmate of a women's camp used to as her fellow prisoners who were dreaming of nothing but the day o release.[4] "I know why I am here," a woman in the same camp con fessed to an unknown comrade (it was a bleak morning, at the hou of roll-call). "I am a singer, and I have often sung in church concert For I liked people to take note of me and look at me. In these col morning hours I have come to realize that I did not sing in God honor but in my own. This is why I am here."[5]

However, no reflection on wisdom gained through afflictio fathoms the mystery of suffering. We must descend deeper and fac the idea of the innocent sacrifice of love which redeems the othe wise unredeemable circuit of evil repaid with evil, injury calling fo vengeance, hatred begetting hatred—a redemption which does not c away with justice but restores it and crowns it with love. With th idea in their hearts, as true followers of the Cross, men like Ma Joseph Metzzer accepted death. Of Metzzer it is reported that h walked to the scaffold upright, his face shining. Like Thomas Mor whom he venerated highly, he laid his head on the block with a smi on his lips. "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit," were his la words.[6]

The Christian conscience against the world—this is to win freedo through the agony of suffering, and to restore martyrdom to i ancient honors as that form of Christian existence which we mu dread and yet recognize as supreme.

In the eyes of the world, as far as this world makes itself hea through the acknowledged spokesmen of public opinion, the suffe ings and deaths of these martyrs count for nothing. They are to small an item to be reckoned against the enormous crimes committ in the name of the German people by their evil government. B there may be a different and more nearly just appraisal of these sac

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 137.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 125.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 126–7.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 157.

ices. The better calculus might show that not only Germany but the whole world is in need of their redemptive power.

Under a totalitarian dictatorship the temptation for the Christian conscience consists in appeasement, in not acknowledging the radical choice which the hour demands. Since the decision to be reached can be nothing short of heroic, it is impossible to condemn in retrospect those who, when the occasion arose, failed to live up to it. We can only hope that we ourselves will not be led into this temptation or that, if we are not to be spared, a strength greater than ours might be added unto our weakness.

History is generally opaque to human vision. Out of the multiplicity of intelligible patterns no recognizable master plan emerges. Yet at the turning points of the course of events, it takes on the simplicity of a parable illustrating a moral truth. The juncture which we have reached at present seems to be of this kind. War and peace are in the balance. But the war at whose approach we tremble is not a war like other wars. All of man's terrestrial hopes are at stake, perhaps his very survival. Will the awful decision depend upon a whim of the Dictator, the short-temperedness of weary diplomats at the conference table, or some other accidental occurrence? It is more human, and also more reasonable, to believe that the choice will be reached in the depths of the mind of man, or rather of those men who are invested with however insignificant a fraction of power. Like Soloviev's hero, man wandering in a dark wood has reached the brink of an abyss. Will he, with the apocalyptic writer's Antichrist, cry out: "He pities me. . . . He is not risen. He is not risen," and, finding courage in despair, hurl himself into the depths? Or will he rather in humility turn to the gentle and mournful figure that has appeared at his side?

THE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION OF EUROPE

Wilhelm Röpke

In the present welter of conflicting views on economic and socia policies there is at least one point on which there is fairly genera agreement. Liberals and most socialists, Americans and most Euro peans realize that the disintegration of Europe into more or less dis connected and unbalanced national economies is pitiful and tha every effort has to be made to overcome this wasteful and parochia system by what is now called an "integration" of Europe.

But what is the reason that so little headway has been made thu far towards reaching this goal? Why is it that now, after almost tw years of Marshall Plan aid have elapsed, the need of European "inte gration" is greater than ever? Although there seems to be genera satisfaction with the results of the ERP as far as the recovery o national production and the economic rehabilitation on the nationa level are concerned, even the most incurable optimist betrays hi impatience when looking on the international scene where exchang control, bilateralism, austere import controls, disequilibria of th balance of payments, "dollar shortages," and national isolation persis in spite of all international organizations, conferences, charters, reso lutions, and high-sounding projects of economic and monetar unions. Where is the real cause of resistance? And who is responsible Are the European governments ill-willed and obstinate or the Amer icans too impatient, too exacting, or too little realistic? And wha precisely is the point where the lever has to be applied in order finall to move the inert block of European economic nationalism?

The best answer to all these questions seems to be to stress the fac that, so far, there has not been, in responsible quarters, the desirabl clarity about the issue involved. Neither is it very obvious what i meant by European "integration," nor do we find precise notions o the right means to achieve it. This double confusion has led to tha fundamental and tenacious fallacy which so far has been frustratin all the laudable efforts for European integration. This fallacy is t

believe or to take for granted that the problem involved is primarily international or can be usefully tackled primarily on the international level, while in reality it is first of all a national problem and should be tackled on the level of the different national economies. As such a belief, it is just another example of that big error of our time which can be termed "wrong internationalism" and which is characterized by the tendency to assume that international order can be anything else than the result of national order and to renew, whenever a problem proves to be intractable, our pathetic hopes on international conferences, agreements, and machineries.[1] Like charity, however, international order begins at home where also the present disorder has begun. To deal with all the present symptoms of international disorder as problems of an international character and to forget that their real cause lies in the *general* disintegration of our society is to behave as a doctor treating a skin disease as a case of a simple itch whereas the tragic truth is that we have to do with a case of syphilis. That is what our responsible statesmen have been doing now for twenty years, with the poor results to be expected.

As a matter of fact, economic integration of Europe—which I will try to define—will ensue, automatically and without any international effort at all, once the different national governments change their internal economic policies. As long as they pursue these policies—which I will also try to define presently—within their own frontiers, they are bound to produce disorder, disequilibrium, national isolation, and anarchy on the international level; and they are unable to lay aside the external barriers and to take part, effectively and sincerely, in an international effort of "integration." Once they cease, however, to pursue these isolating and dislocating policies, each country for itself and on its own responsibility, European "integration" will look after itself. Like international order in general, European integration must begin where the disintegration started: with the national policies and with the ideologies responsible for them. All attempts to bring about European integration while the obnoxious national policies remain unchanged are—to use a German simile—just as many attempts at "washing the fur without wetting it." Whatever merits we may discover in such attempts, our first and highly salutary reaction should be the thought that they tend to be either futile or unnecessary: futile if the national policies remain unchanged, unnecessary if they are changed. Though we shall find this statement too sweeping to be acceptable in the present situation of

[1] Cf. my book, *Internationale Ordnung* (Zürich, 1945) pp. 22–23.

Europe, it contains a sobering truth from which every further discussion of useful international action should start.

After these general remarks, we can be more precise and ask first, what is to be meant by "economic integration" in Europe. What this term suggests is obviously a structure of international economic relations which approaches as much as possible that which we find within a national economy where there is such freedom of business transactions that a nationwide division of labor and a nationwide exchange between all producers-consumers is possible. A national economy is "integrated" because there is an unhampered interdependence and interconnection between all regions which, at closer inspection, reveals itself as a threefold community of payments, prices, and markets.[2] Notwithstanding the obstacles of transportation costs between the different regions of the national economy and other factors working for decentralized production, there is always the possibility of buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market wherever this market happens to be at the moment. This possibility is based on the complete interchangeability of money between the different regions of the national economy, and it is this same possibility which makes the national economy one coherent unit. This complete liberty in choosing the market for buying or selling is precisely what we call, on the international level, multilateralism. And the interchangeability of money which is the condition of that liberty is called, on the international level, convertibility of currencies.

By this comparison with the conditions to be found within a national economy, everything now becomes clear. It is not the idiosyncrasy of fossil liberals or single-minded Americans to insist on the necessity of restoring multilateralism in international trade; it is to ask for the prime condition of a really "integrated" international trade. But when we remember what "multilateralism" means inside a national economy we realize at once that, on the international level, multilateralism is tantamount to the free convertibility of currencies. Only in this way is it possible to achieve that international community of payments, prices, and markets which gives sense to our request for European economic integration. Since it is this community which we reasonably mean by asking for European integration as the nearest approach to the ideal economic integration to be found inside the national economies, there is no sense in our claim unless we ask for multilateralism, i.e., free convertibility of currencies.

This, however, is nothing utopian, for it is precisely what, until

[2] For further analysis see my *Internationale Ordnung*, and also my *International Economic Disintegration* (London, 1942).

quite recently, has been the natural order of things in Europe. While we tend to believe that European integration will be a bold and unprecedented step into a brighter future which also can be achieved only by bold and unprecedented measures, we are apt to forget that it is something which has already existed in the past. In the sense in which we most urgently ask for it today, Europe has been economically integrated as long as the free convertibility of currencies at stable exchange rates and the absence of quantitative trade controls was knitting Europe, nay, the whole world, together into a multilateral international economic system with its community of payments, prices, and markets. Under this essential aspect, there was no difference between Europe and the national economy of the United States. If we hear it said so often today that the large integrated space of the United States should be a model for Europe, we cannot help replying that in the past Europe has been such an integrated space and an even larger and more populous one.

In saying this, we do not forget that there were tariff walls in Europe even when there was free convertibility at stable exchange rates and multilateralism. We hasten to add, therefore, that European economic integration was far from ideal and that there were then just as many reasons as today to work for a dismantling of those tariff walls. The present author has spent most of his riper years in pointing out the dangers and grave problems of European protectionism. But we must allow no confusion of issues. It should be obvious that economic nationalism by protective tariffs is of an entirely different kind from that by measures destroying convertibility and multilateralism; it diminishes international economic integration as the Alps diminish the national economic integration of Switzerland, but it does not destroy the very structure of this integration by ripping the multilateral network of trade into bilateral shreds. Of course, this argument must not be overworked, or understood as an apology of protectionism. All we want to say is this: we would have every reason to be happy if the only flaw in European economic integration today were that moderate protectionism in which the European countries were indulging until the Great Depression. What principally matters is the fact that up to 1914 and then in the twenties the free convertibility of currencies at stable exchange rates worked as if the whole continent had one single currency system like the United States. As long as the import duties are not excessive, their effect is not essentially different from that of the Alps within the Swiss, or the great distances within the American national economy: they widen the cost margin between separate places without interfering with the market

mechanism itself. Since, on the other hand, the geographical configuration of Europe is such that transportation costs offer less resistance to the economic integration of all parts of the continent than they do in North America, Europe does not compare so unfavorably with the "large free-trade area" of the United States as is commonly supposed.

If we thus try to see things in their right proportion, it appears that the real problems are not the intra-European trade barriers as such, but their height and particularly their kind. The real economic disintegration of Europe which has led to the present impasse began when, after the great crisis of international settlements in 1931, those measures were adopted which destroyed multilateralism, convertibility, and the international working of the price mechanism. All these new instruments of international economic policy—whether import quotas, state monopolies of foreign trade, or exchange control—have one thing in common: they are collectivist in the sense that the government, instead of merely changing the conditions for the working of the market mechanism as it does by import duties, now replaces it by its orders and by fixing the quanta involved. Both by their technique and by their aims, these measures of "planned" international trade correspond to the general trend of our time which we call collectivist or socialist. What is more: they are the necessary counterpart of any national socialist system which replaces the market by the governmental office, the price by command, and the motives of profit and loss by the fear of penal sanctions.

If we want to understand why the collectivist control of foreign trade which is the integral part of any national socialist system is bound to bring about disastrous disintegration of international economic relations (in the sense which we have defined), we remember that there is one capital measure which is the real keystone of the whole system. This measure is exchange control, which can be defined as a policy to defend by physical force a wrong rate of exchange. By defending such a wrong rate, it is bound to cause disequilibrium of the balance of payments and all sorts of distortions and dislocations which make it difficult for the government to get out of this self-inflicted tangle. If we want to characterize Socialism by one single institution, we may say: Socialism means exchange control. Exchange control, however, means inconvertibility of currencies and thus the end of multilateralism, which, as we saw, is only another word for our goal of international economic integration. It is exchange control which is the Pandora's box whence proceed all the evils: bilateralism, deficits of the balance of payments, strangulation of international trade—in short, international economic disintegration.

After having defined what we can reasonably mean by asking for European economic integration today, we are now able to say precisely how to reach this aim. To restore economic integration in Europe is to remove the cause of present disintegration, that is, the collectivist control of foreign trade which culminates in exchange control. But exchange control, as we saw, is—whatever its distant origin—today inseparably connected with the system of National Collectivism as still practiced by most European countries. It has become the integral part of that type of national economic policy with which the world has become familiar ever since German National Socialism set a much admired example. It is the well-known combination of repressed inflation, overstrain of the national productive resources by the welfare state and untimely or ambitious investment projects, collectivist controls, "over-full employment," state monopolies, bilateralism, subsidies, fiscal socialism, "cheap money" policies, "austerity," and exchange control. The degree and the thoroughness with which this National Collectivism is applied in the different European countries vary from the maximum of the British, Norwegian, and Spanish examples down to the mild cases of Holland and France; while Italy and Western Germany make remarkable efforts to disentangle themselves. But, with the notable exceptions of Switzerland and Belgium, all European governments still practice National Collectivism to the extent that they feel compelled to retain exchange control. The case of Belgium is all the more remarkable as she is, since the war, the first example of a European country which, by dismantling National Collectivism and accepting the efforts involved, succeeded in removing exchange control and thus restoring her external economic equilibrium. On the other hand, Sweden offers the example of a country which, by the opposite experiment of deliberate "repressed inflation," proves that even the richest country, which has been as much spared by the war as Switzerland, may manage to create that "crisis of the balance of payments" which is used as a pretext for exchange control and quantitative trade restrictions.

As long as there is National Collectivism in Europe there will be exchange control. As long as there is exchange control there will be international economic disintegration and disequilibrium. Inversely, if we want to have international economic integration and equilibrium, we must remove exchange control. If we want to remove exchange control, we must dismantle National Collectivism and say farewell to the corresponding ideologies of planning and "full employment" as it is understood today in Europe. That seems to be the inexorable logic which the present state of Europe teaches to any keen

and unprejudiced observer. It is a logic which is as true after the devaluations as before. The devaluations certainly eased the strain, and they were in most countries the indispensable condition for the dismantling of exchange control and National Collectivism. But the chance offered by the devaluations has not been used at all, or only to an insufficient degree. In this respect, the European governments resemble a surgeon who opens the abdomen without removing the inflamed appendix.

Now it becomes clear what we mean when we say that European economic disintegration comes from within. National Collectivism has become responsible for such a degree of national isolation, international friction, and international disequilibrium that an entirely untenable situation has ensued. Since this crisis of the international economy—which the ERP is to alleviate in Europe until 1952—is tantamount to the crisis of National Collectivism, it cannot be mastered unless the latter has been removed.

To this conclusion an objection could be made. If National Socialism is admittedly a failure, why should it not be possible to try planning on a European level and thus bring about the coveted European integration by creating a vast collectivist super-economy of all ERP countries? Our answer to this is: European collectivism is either an illusion or a nightmare.

European collectivism is an illusion if we hope to bring it about by voluntary co-operation of the nations concerned. In order to understand this we must remember that it is the very essence of collectivism to make the economic process an affair of the government like the army or the law courts. It means the thorough "politicalization" of economic life, which now becomes entirely dependent on the administration, which gives its orders and enforces them by its penal sanctions. International collectivism, therefore, supposes an international state able to give and enforce its orders like a national state. To merge the collectivist systems of several national governments is to merge these governments themselves into a superstate. To visualize such a union as a practical proposition is difficult at any time. What makes the prospect simply utopian in our present case is the fact that the governments which we assume to merge into an international superstate are collectivist and that this superstate itself is to be collectivist. Collectivist government means the highest possible degree of centralization, which excludes any genuine regional self-government, just as, inversely, collectivism of the smaller political units means disintegration between them. Under collectivism, then, either the smaller polit-

ical units destroy the community on a larger scale or the larger unit destroys the smaller political units.

Let me illustrate this most important point by the example of the country where these pages are being written. If we consider the federal state of Switzerland, two things are certain. The first is that Switzerland is possible as a federal state only because it is this loose and liberal form of political structure which alone allows the peaceful and voluntary combination of different nationalities, languages, temperaments, and cultures. The other point is that collectivism would spell the end of Swiss federalism and, therefore, of Switzerland. For either the collectivism is cantonal, in which case the Swiss union would be destroyed, or the collectivism is one of the central government, in which case it would make a sham of federalism and self-government and reduce it to the merely folkloristic federalism which, at best, may be found in communist Russia or Yugoslavia.

What *cantonal* collectivism and its disintegration of the Swiss community would mean for Switzerland, national collectivism means today for Europe. That is the truth which we have established in the preceding paragraphs. But now we recognize the other truth: What collectivism of the *federal* government would mean for Switzerland, European collectivism would mean for the whole continent: a degree of centralization precluding federalism and national self-government. In other words, the political union which is the prerequisite of international collectivism is not even possible in the mild and loose form of an international federation. Since, however, everybody (including the European socialists) admits that an international federation is the only way to achieve a political union of Europe, it follows that collectivism makes such a union impossible—the same collectivism which makes this union absolutely necessary if we want a European collectivism.

A political union of the European countries is little short of utopian anyway, but if it has any chance at all, then most certainly it is only in the way in which the multinational state of Switzerland has been made possible by that neat balance of the centrifugal and the centripetal forces which we call federalism. Federalism on the international scale, however, is no more compatible with collectivism than it is on the national level. On this point we are fortunate enough to have the test case of the noble endeavors of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxemburg to contrive on a smaller scale what we discuss for the whole of Europe: a merger of national economies. Among these three countries, the Netherlands still adheres to a sort of National Collectiv-

ism which, though somewhat mild compared with that of Great Britain, nevertheless is characterized by a rigid system of exchange control and a fair measure of repressed inflation. After the experience of five years of unavailing efforts to realize the real aim of the Benelux as an economic union, it has become obvious to everyone that this union is impossible as long as the Netherlands sticks to National Collectivism. To make this an *international* collectivism of the whole Benelux, however, is not feasible either, since this would suppose a political union of the three national states into a Benelux State. It is difficult to imagine that this might have been possible in former liberal times, but it is a foregone conclusion that it would be absolutely impossible today since this Benelux State, supposing it to be a collectivist one, could not even be achieved in the federal form which spares the legitimate feelings of the several nations concerned. It would make short shrift of national life and national self-government. The planning, commanding, and coercing center would push around the former national states in a manner which, in Switzerland, the central government at Berne would know to be the beginning of the end of the Swiss federal union.

That is only another way of saying that such a political union of national states is not feasible as a voluntary act of democratic governments supported by the co-operation of all peoples concerned. It could be brought about and kept functioning only by that kind of force and cajoling exercised formerly by Hitler and now by Stalin. A collectivist union in Europe would be only another version of the German *Grossraum* or of the Russian system of satellite states. If that is not impossible, it would certainly be the very denial of all the political and cultural ideals whose defense is the foremost reason in the present drive for an integrated Europe. Then European collectivism would not be an illusion, but it would be a nightmare. The more we travel along this road of European Planning, the clearer will become the formidable dilemma between international collectivism and international democracy and co-operation.

There is a last point which we have to bear in mind. If we try to put the reasoning of the preceding paragraphs into a more general conclusion, we can say that collectivism, at whatever stage in the scale of political units it is tried (whether regional, national, or continental), invariably means the highest possible concentration of control and power in the smaller unit, but disintegration and disunion of the larger unit. Regional collectivism disintegrates the nation, and national collectivism the international economic and political community. It follows that European collectivism would neces-

sarily involve disintegration of the world at large. Even if it were possible, it would lead to European autarky, and all the consequences of national collectivism—isolation, dislocation of the trade channels, bilateralism, disequilibrium, disorder, and anarchy—would reappear in the relations between ERP-Europe and the rest of the world. If there is general agreement that national collectivism causes the gravest disturbances of international trade and of international payments, continental collectivism would of necessity mean that those disturbances would only be repeated on a higher geographical level. Even if it is a dream, it is a bad one. European "integration" under collectivism would be bought at the cost of all the more intercontinental disintegration. Every step in this direction means that we are adding one further stone to the construction of a European *Grossraum* in the sinister sense of this term.

A clear grasp of this whole reasoning is so badly needed today that it seems useful to sum it up in a sort of logical chain:

1. National collectivism has ended in an impasse, and it is incompatible with any sort of international federation or economic union.
2. International collectivism, which seems to offer an escape, supposes an international state.
3. This international state, as a free act of democratic nations, is inconceivable because, as a collectivist state, it would be a hypercentralized one excluding any genuine federal structure and national self-government.
4. Consequently, international collectivism, unless brought about by force, is an illusion.
5. Consequently, collectivism means practically national collectivism.
6. Consequently, the integration of Europe as a voluntary act of nations is incompatible with collectivism and only feasible if the opposite economic system, the Market Economy, is made dominant in Europe.
7. Any step towards a European integration by continental collectivism is a step both towards international despotism (*Grossraum*) and continental autarky.

The fact that it is collectivism which is the real villain in the piece is of the utmost significance because it adds to the devastating list of the paradoxes of collectivism which it is so difficult to make its advocates realize. After having learned that it is a Road to Serfdom, that it is a way to economic disorder and paralysis, and that it is the path to Supermonopoly from which there is no escape, we now recognize in

Europe that, in addition to all this, it means of necessity national autarky and international disintegration of the most incurable and worst possible kind. If this is not the most distressing aspect of collectivism, it is at least perhaps its most indisputable aspect. Collectivism destroys the international economy in the genuine sense of a free, multilateral, rational, and balanced system, but when we try to correct this by any conscious effort of international co-operation we find that the same collectivism which prompts this effort also nullifies it. It is dynamite, not mortar.

Now we are able to state what is fundamentally wrong with the current conceptions underlying the present efforts for European "integration." The national economic policies of most European countries, which culminate in exchange control, are just as incompatible with European integration as is the senseless and utopian effort to repeat this collectivism on the continental level. For this reason, it is putting the cart before the horse to ask more and more impatiently for European integration without asking first for the removal of collectivist policies which make this integration necessary but impossible. We repeat: European integration begins at home.

What the present policies for European "integration" really amount to is that in one sense we are asking too much, while in another we are asking too little. To ask for an international economic union has always been a large order. Examples of such unions are very rare in history, and even in these rare cases it took a long time and an uncommon degree of political affinity of the nations concerned to achieve this end. But, as we saw, to expect such a union under the present circumstances and to expect it quickly is to ask for the impossible. The Americans could spare themselves bitter disappointment if this were realized. But we also saw that it is not only asking too much but also asking for the wrong thing because it would be a kind of integration which repeats the disadvantages of collectivism on the continental scale, including that of continental autarky and greater intercontinental disintegration.

While this means that we strain all our efforts for something which is both impossible and bad, we are, on the other hand, asking too little. Compared with the colossal and sensationally new aim of an international union, it would be very modest to ask the different national governments to give up policies which are bad anyway and to return to a more normal economic order without internal repressed inflation and external exchange control. To ask this is not only to invite the European governments to remember what is natural, nor-

mal, and a matter of common sense, but also to tackle the problem of European integration at the right end. It is certainly not to the credit of the wisdom of our time that it is precisely this which is not done.

In making this bitter comment, we do not forget the newly formed European Payments Union. While it may be able to solve some of the problems of minor importance or less urgency, it is difficult to see how it could solve the principal problem of genuine integration which supposes free multilateralism and convertibility of currencies. All the technicalities of this project do not answer the question of how it could work without constant further subsidies from the creditor countries (the United States, Switzerland, and Belgium) as long as the real causes of international disintegration and disequilibrium persist, i.e., exchange control, artificial exchange rates, and the national collectivist systems of which they form an integral part. There is even a real danger that it might become instrumental in bringing about that European autarkic bloc from which Europe has even more to fear than the other continents.

All such arrangements as the European Payments Union, however, might be defended on the ground that, if properly construed and handled in the right spirit, they could be used for putting pressure on the different governments to dismantle exchange control and disequilibrating policies. That is an idea which certainly makes sense. There are strong reasons, however, to be skeptical and to warn of the danger of wasting time and energy on another illusion. It is difficult to see how the countries which insist on their disequilibrating policies could be compelled or even strongly motivated by the European Payments Union to behave differently than before and not to ask for more help or not to increase their import restrictions.

But the idea of the necessity of some kind of strong international action is far from being unsound, and there we come back to a point which we stressed in the beginning of this study. It is true that international disintegration and integration are matters of national policies, and no international machinery can be a substitute for the necessary national changes. But we must admit that national collectivism and exchange control involve a government in a vicious circle from which it is not easily disentangled. Though more often than not this difficulty is used as a pretext for sticking to national collectivism and exchange control for ideological reasons, its existence cannot be denied; and if it is used as a pretext there is all the more reason to take it away from such recalcitrant governments. It is here where strong and intelligent international action is needed in order to make

it easier for the different governments to change their collectivist policies and to get out of the ruts of exchange control. It would be international action for the sake of national action.

It is here that the Marshall Plan offers a heaven-sent opportunity which should be used without further delay. As the ERP has reached its immediate stop-gap aims while the problem of international equilibrium and integration remains unsolved, it has become increasingly clear that from now on its primary function should be to help the different countries to dismantle exchange control and to restore the free and all-round convertibility of their currencies. The first and indispensable step in this direction, however, is to obtain a clear notion of what the problem of European economic integration really involves.

WHAT IS EUROPE?

André Siegfried

UNTIL RECENTLY, the three terms, Europe, the white race, and Western civilization were nearly synonymous. The white race lived almost exclusively in the Old World, and Western civilization was hardly distinguishable from European civilization. But today, a part of the now dominant white race is in the New World, and a Western civilization is forming, some of whose traits are not European. More serious still is the fact that Europe itself is no longer completely Western because, beyond the iron curtain, the principles on which our deepest convictions were once founded are no longer respected. From this arises a problem of Europe in its relations not only with other civilizations but also with Western civilization itself. The West and Europe were considered self-duplicating terms when they were the undisputed center of the planet. This will no longer be true if they don't possess the leadership of the world, and especially the leadership of Western civilization. If this is the case, what is happening to Europe? That is the first problem. But also, what is happening to the West? This second problem is no less harassing for us who are part of a tradition of twenty centuries.

The characteristics and foundations of European civilization seem to rest on four concepts: knowledge, man, law or order, industrial production. The first three of these notions come from antiquity. The fourth comes from the modern world, and especially from the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century.

Our concept of knowledge comes to us from the Greeks. We owe them the habit of considering problems from the viewpoint of reason alone, liberated from magic, from superstition, even from religion, under conditions of a secularization of thought. Whereas the Oriental collects information, the European looks for the intelligible reason for things, and from this habit he develops a sense of proportion and notably a sense of time. He knows what an objective inquiry is. This

kind of reasoning is characteristic of the Occident, but for a long time it was only in Europe that men reasoned in this way.

We consider man a thinking individual, capable of using his reason, of exerting self-control, and hence deserving respect for his human dignity. He deserves, therefore, to be free and to receive guarantees for his freedom under the law. Here the Greeks are again our teachers, and the writers of the Gospels also, because they taught us the equality of all men and of all souls, a notion which the eighteenth century subsequently transposed to the political domain where it developed with an amazingly dynamic fervor. Europe is therefore the descendant, to an equal degree, of Socrates and of Christ.

Greece had conceived natural law, the relation of causes and effects, but Rome gave us the notion of jurisprudence and a conception of order by which the West is distinguished fundamentally from other civilizations. Wherever Roman order penetrated, there still exists today a certain conception of property, of family, of law and order. Properly speaking, that is what we mean by Europe. Beyond its boundary are countries in formation, which are separating from us today. We descend from Rome as well as from Greece.

The most distant source of the Industrial Revolution can also be found in Greece where a scientific method had been discovered. But the ancients were not interested in its practical application. That has been the work of the new mechanical age, beginning with the eighteenth century. New technical knowledge has permitted man to capture the forces of nature and has increased its power indefinitely. Science has been placed in the service of industry. By changing its character, it has ceased being purely contemplative as before and has become an instrument of power, running the risk of corrupting the purity of its initial inspiration. This is a deviation from the Greek tradition, although we still have contact with its spirit.

The combination of these four factors provides the basis of European civilization, as well as that of Western tradition in its classical form. But some kind of equilibrium must exist among them. We were civilized before the technical discoveries of the Industrial Revolution. Would we remain so, in the earlier European sense, if industrialism absorbed all our energies? A civilization emphasizing technology, and losing the meaning of its Mediterranean tradition, would perhaps still be Western but it would not be European, and therein lies one of the most acute problems of our time. To remain itself, the West needs a Europe faithful to its past and to its basic aspirations.

It was not by chance that Western civilization was born in Europe,

and especially in the Mediterranean region. There it found a geographical setting where man was not crushed by nature and could establish a just balance between the elements and himself. The fact that in Europe man can take the measure of nature is highly important, because it is the only continent where this is true. The European, at least the authentic European, has drawn from this, not exactly a morality, but a way of behavior peculiar to him. He knows, from age-long experience, that a stable relationship exists between his effort and the result to be obtained. Such a relationship is the genesis of a way of behavior assimilated to an economic morality which, despite upheavals and wars, distinguishes Europe from Asia, and which America has inherited from us. Peasant wisdom and artisan honor are typical examples. Whether these qualities can survive in a mechanized Europe is a direct aspect of the crisis which today threatens the personality of Europe, inherited from many generations.

On these bases I think we can determine the true European spirit. First, we encounter a magnificent confidence in man, with the conviction that he can and should make his own destiny and refuse to remain passively unhappy. "Heaven helps him who helps himself," says one of our typically European proverbs, which means that we call on the gods but act as if they would do nothing for us. This is a secular position, distinguishing the Occident from the Orient, and which, while recognizing first causes, takes seriously only secondary causes.

We have confidence in man, but Rousseau hasn't persuaded us that man is naturally good. (Americans are the real disciples of Rousseau.) And here intervenes, in the portrait of Europe, the notion of age. The authentic European has behind him two thousand years of history; and when Auguste Comte says that humanity is composed of more dead people than living, he expresses the most European of truths. Above all, we are the continent where memory of the past counts, and from it we draw an age-old accumulated wealth which underscores the exceptional value of our tradition. Asia counts more centuries, but is it aware of them? America, or at least post-Columbus America, has only four centuries behind it. In this past, still close to us while infinitely venerable, Europe has a continuous contact with the oldest civilizations, with Rome and Greece, with Egypt and even with the oldest Asiatic civilization. This contact is direct, especially in Mediterranean Europe, whence the importance, not sufficiently stressed, of the Latin factor in the equilibrium of our culture. Perhaps the Anglo-Saxon and the Nordic in general are more effica-

cious in production, but the Latin spirit maintains in Europe a classical tradition, propagator of critical independence and disinterestedness in intellectual matters.

This aspect of maturity is essential to a comprehension of Europe, but unfortunately it does not only present advantages. Our maturity, in certain respects, is close to old age. Our natural resources are important, but they have been abundantly drawn upon and we know only too well that they are not inexhaustible. Consequently these resources are a cause of conflict which is manifested either in battles over territory or in class struggles over the division of commodities. In a word, it has become more difficult to produce than to share, and that is why, in the politics of the Old World, the emphasis has been placed more and more on the distribution of wealth. Paul Morand stated this in a comment of violent ellipsis and sad nostalgia: "Like all old peninsulas, Europe is egotistical, envious, democratic and dispersed. A curious miniature spectacle, seen from the outside, when the world belongs more and more to the massive continents: Africa, Asiatic China, North America. Europe dismantled by modern explosives: greed for money and revolutionary spirit. Europe grown so ugly, but still our mother." (*Rien que la Terre,* p. 251.) Under these conditions, an internal struggle seems the law of Europe—for its punishment doubtless, but also perhaps for its perfecting, because in these ceaselessly renewed oppositions one must see a commanding source of superiority.

The personality of this continent, which is unique, is expressed in a congenital contradiction. On the one hand, a spirit of initiative, of creation, of organizing power; on the other, a critical spirit, constantly discussing, weighing, measuring, denying, manifesting even an instinct of revolt: revolt against authority and, if need be, against the gods themselves (Prometheus). I do not think that we should deplore this fundamental non-conformity of Europe. Our vitality and creative production in the domain of thought largely result from this spirit of opposition, of contrast and of dualism, in which the most characteristic traits of the European personality may be seen.

Is this not the way Europe defends and preserves its individuality? By renouncing all controversy it would dry up one of the richest sources of its genius. Péguy forcefully said, "True philosophy is constantly questioning everything. . . . We refuse to accept the dogmas formulated by the State as well as those formulated by the Church. . . . It is better to form one hundred liberated intelligences than thousands of amorphous and enslaved intelligences." We would die from conformity, from one-partyism, from totalitarianism, and even from

the reign of experts who threaten to dominate America. Perhaps we should see in this habit of opposing contraries by virtue of critical intelligence the explanation of the unique charm which the culture of the Old World possesses. We still admit art for art's sake, knowledge for the sake of knowledge, life for man and not life for productivity. Fundamentally Europe continues to hope that man will be considered a goal and not a means. Despite our wars, destruction, revolutions, the true Europeans at least are still experimenting with the joy of living. Above capitalistic or soviet efficiency, above technology, the jealous matriarch of our century, we persist in placing the figure of man, not the man who produces, but the one who thinks or the one who simply lives. It is a fact that when we return from Russia, we breathe again, and when we return from the United States, we relax. However wretched it is, old Europe, upset and trampled on, preserves a singular seductive power.

But what is its geographical domain and what are the limits of this very special climate we have just described? As long as there is a sense of measure, of proportion, I would say we are in Europe. With the appearance of massive continents, we leave Europe and enter countries still in the process of formation, which still depend on ancient European tradition and which will have to be reconciled to her one day if Europe is to be complete. From this viewpoint, the real Europe comprises the two main parts of Central and Western Europe, to which the whole Mediterranean should be added, because the East begins actually with the camel and the palm tree. This would be approximately the ancient Roman Empire. It is also the Empire of Charlemagne. It is a curious fact that the boundaries of military occupation agreed upon at the fatal Yalta Conference reproduced approximately the Eastern frontier of Europe in the year 800. To the east of this boundary, Eastern and Soviet Europe have now turned toward Asia, and not the Atlantic. We should not give up placing the continent's center of gravity in its central and western parts. Its heart is there, and its soul even more so.

The enriching collaboration between the Greco-Latin Mediterranean and the countries of the North formed modern Europe. The Greeks had already invented everything, and nothing would have prevented them from developing their civilization in the technological sense, if they had undertaken it. Science, for them, was contemplation. To use it in a practical sense for man's comfort would have degraded it. It will be remembered that Archimedes, who had invented precious ballistic instruments with which to fight the Romans, apologized to his citizens, as if he had perverted scientific

research from its right purpose: disinterested curiosity for Truth. Man's comfort didn't seem to count either. The climate no doubt was too perfect. Quite different were the conditions of northwestern Europe at the beginning of the modern period. There, nature, far less clement, forced men to build strong houses, and provide a material comfort which wasn't offered them gratuitously. They called upon science, not only to answer questions arising from philosophical curiosity, but to furnish the means of bettering the conditions of each man. Socrates and the Gospel belonged to the same inspiration of disinterestedness with regard to the material comforts of life. The work of Bacon reveals a decidedly different preoccupation which relates it to our most authentically modern life, where methods, whose principle had been discovered centuries before, should be put to the service of new-born industry. There could be found the tradition of Prometheus, the forerunner and real initiator of industrial production. The flame of the Socratic mind still shed light, but the fire which the demigod gave men was invested with a burning passion, more equivocal, less disinterested, Dionysian rather than Apollonian. The European tradition can maintain its position only by continuing the equilibrium between Socrates and Prometheus. We shall see shortly that Prometheus is winning now, to such a degree that the very essence of the European mind is imperiled.

Europe first distinguished itself from the Orient and became aware of its personality by opposing itself to Asia at the time of the Persian Wars. At that time, it was a question of methods of thought and institutions guaranteeing the independence of the citizens. Later, in modern times, the efficiency which the mastery of the machine gave Europeans easily made them masters of the world. Since the eighteenth century, our superiority in the domain of production has resulted in the hegemony of the planet.

The superiority of Europe in terms of production is such that the East can in no way be compared to it. Asia is superior in many ways, but when actual productiveness is at stake, it offers no rivalry. Thus a frontier was erected between the West and Asia which corresponds to the opposition of two economic or technical climates. What is the source of this superiority on which we built the wealth acquired by us during the last two centuries?

Asia has artisans as competent as ours, if not more competent, but Europe is superior in the use of the machine whose monopoly it has held for a long time. But now the Orientals have borrowed our machines and can use them as well as we can, so that our superiority is disputed. Our superiority will continue if it is a question not only

of operating the machines, but of inventing them, perfecting them and even manufacturing them whenever a difficult product is concerned. If there were, hypothetically and symbolically, a war of the West against the East, involving a blockade of inventions and competencies, what would we see? In a few years, in a few months, the progress of the West would be tremendous, but the East would follow slowly. Until now, this superiority of ours has not been taken away from us. If we no longer have its monopoly, and if we have been partially outdistanced, it is not because of Asia, but because of America, that is, of members of our own race. We shall speak later of this new rivalry.

I am tempted, however, not to place the real source of European productiveness in the machine. Our sense of administration is the real cause of our power. Production first passed through a period of the artisan, in which the producer, an individual worker, used tools. Then came the mechanical period, founded on the machine, directed by the engineer. We have entered a period which has lasted about twenty years and which I might call the administrative period. Enterprises have become so complex that technicians alone are not sufficient to direct them. They demand organizers capable of administering. But to administer, in the fullest sense of the term, one must have that power of control whose secret the European tradition has preserved. One needs a sense of purpose and the necessary means to attain it. One needs also the sense of time, the vision, and even more, the spirit of conservation, demonstrated not only in the wearing out but in the simple maintenance of tools, machines and instruments. Europe, and not the Orient, possesses these qualities of the administrator, and that is why the great works of the modern period, a Suez Canal for example, are strictly creations of the West. Up to now I do not believe these powers have diminished.

The sources for this astonishing mastery are perhaps not those which might be imagined at first. We have technical skill, but what are the sources maintaining it? I believe, as far as Europe is concerned, that technology depends directly on culture. It is not a simple problem of manual skill and craft but something more profound. Our technique is superior because our scientific method has been organized into a collective practice of production. Realization depended on intellectual mastery put at the service of productive returns. In company with Bacon, Descartes appears as the philosophical mind who made possible the Industrial Revolution. It was necessary to think in accordance with a method that was certain, without which there would have been no result. Nothing would have devel-

oped unless European thought had learned, from these great philosophers, to direct thought toward action and to surround action with thought. This association of thought and realization is peculiar to the West. Péguy, in his comments on Descartes, has indicated it forcibly: "What I mean is that his method (Descartes') is also a morality, a morality of thought or a morality to think with, or, if you prefer, everything in him is morality because everything is direction and will of direction. His greatest invention perhaps, his innovation and his masterstroke is to have directed his thought deliberately as if it were an action." (*Note Conjointe,* p. 39.)

Péguy's commentary seems to illuminate the special originality of the European, his sense of direction, to which we have just referred. Without violating the independence of his thought, this permits him to collaborate with the realizations of technical skill, while technical skill is nourished by the same intellectual substance which nourishes the philosophers. But to achieve this the two aspects of direction and independence, while collaborating, must not be confused. This is the essential dualism characteristic of European culture. The Greek way of reasoning permits us to treat practical problems in themselves, objectively, without questioning first causes, by willfully separating the rational from the irrational. Pure knowledge benefits from this without religion losing its rights. This is the dualism to which, with respect to a famous statement of Christ, Renan called our attention: " 'Give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.' These profound words decided the future of Christianity. Of a deep spirituality and of a dazzling justice, they founded the separation of the spiritual from the temporal and laid the foundation of true liberalism and true civilization."

Europe is therefore dualistic, and any form of monism or of totalitarianism would surely compromise its integrity. Europe is a continent where each man wants to judge it individually, in accordance with critical criteria, without accepting truth made by some superior, whether he be a priest or a professor or an expert. This is the real humanist tradition and we have been its guarantors until now. Freedom of thought exists only in politically free countries where thought may be expressed, either orally or in written form, without risk for the one speaking or writing. England invented the opposition leader, but he always existed in every country worthy of the name European. The end of free governments would mark the end of European culture. In the time of Napoleon III, men spoke of "essential liberties." Europe's essential liberty is the liberty to criticize.

If Europe originally was opposed to the East, it is today in the

extreme West that a new rivalry has arisen, and this time, the rivalry issues to some extent from Europe itself, since it comes from new peoples who formed themselves from elements of the old continent. There is now a West which is not European, and the part of it which is white is directing the technical progress as well as the economics of the world. At the other extreme, another people, the Russians, likewise white, but of an almost pre-Asiatic moral complexion, tends to dominate the European Asiatic continent. Europe, caught between these two giants, is losing its strength and wondering if it can organize itself economically for survival.

Because of this very new situation, the destiny of Western civilization may be modified. The two leaders, the United States and Russia, however different they are, both derive from geographical conditions which differentiate them totally from Europe. Whereas Europe means self-expression, diversity, personality, the vast spaces of Russia and America lead to the opposite, as in some pre-established harmony, to machine civilization and mass production. We are in the machine age which by its imperious rules inclines our civilization gradually toward organization and conformity based on the advice of experts. After five centuries of machine domination, Western civilization would be very different from what it is today.

In this rivalry between individualism and the mass, Europe, at least what remains of Europe, is imperiled. There is no doubt that we have maintained the spirit of creation and invention, and that in the most difficult techniques our products are unmatched. But we lack the necessary volume, the sufficiently extended framework to benefit from the advantages of large-scale production so necessary for the machine to achieve its full possibilities. It is true there are three hundred and fifty million Europeans against one hundred and fifty million Americans, but the Americans are within the limits of a single country where they enjoy free exchange, whereas Europe with its ten or more countries has ten frontiers and ten or more tariff rates. A simple concept for mass production is impossible as long as economic unity is not realized either in the form of a federation or of a union which, it must be confessed, we are far from having reached. We are handicapped in production by our sense of measures, which have become too small and also by our diversity. This is a condition of our personality. But it is an irremediable obstacle if we wish to hold our place in the modern world which the Industrial Revolution has produced. We succeed in what is for the few and of high quality, but mass production crushes us. Under present conditions of world competition, it is not enough for us to excel in quality and in a few spe-

cialties if we are to maintain the imposing structure left us by our long and glorious past.

Here there arises the problem we have referred to, of the fate of a West where Europe would no longer be leader. North America is now determining world values. The extent of America, so homogeneous and generously proportioned by Providence, leads to the existence of a large population. A transatlantic society has been developed, far more collectivist than is usually imagined and increasingly dominated by the technician, the specialist, and the expert. The United States claims the same individualistic liberal tradition that we do, and they have doubtless remained close to the Christian tradition, so that the treasure bequeathed by the centuries to the West is in good hands. But the factor of equilibrium, which is as we have suggested characteristic of the Latin mind, is not so apparent in the American. Although there are Latins in America, the process of assimilation, of tremendous extent, has severed the roots which were theirs in Europe. If they are not Anglo-Saxons, they have been Anglo-Saxonized, and thus the direct contact with Rome and Greece has been cut off. American idealism guarantees that the individual, in the New World, will not be bullied, and that respect for freedom of thought will be retained. But we cannot fail to realize that a new civilization is being born on the other side of the Atlantic, founded more on technology than on culture, and modifying to a large extent the equalized combination of values which had resulted in modern Europe.

If on the other hand, it should one day be communist Russia which dominates, the West cannot fail to be considerably transformed. Lenin, like Peter the Great, has claims on Western technology. Russia is even aggressively bent on technology; it is completely won over to the reign of the machine. Its physical proportions encourage this, no less than those of America. Over the immense fields of the Ukraine or western Siberia, the tractor testifies to the same efficaciousness as on the bare plains of Dakota or Saskatchewan. But the entire system is guided, not by Western technology, but by Oriental mysticism. Slavic dynamism, composed of fanaticism, passion, and devotion, contradicts the dualism we suggested as being indispensable to the real spirit of the West, to such a degree that a European civilization inspired by Russia, would not be a Western civilization. Let us recall the profound words of Bismarck, who, once ambassador to St. Petersburg, knew his dangerous neighbors: "Russia has nothing to do in Europe; it will catch all the diseases." The Russian contagion is not less dangerous for Europe, if Europe wishes to remain itself.

Thus we see what conditions are presented today by the problem of Europe. She is less well placed to solve it because her crisis comes in an age of administration whose character we have tried to describe. This age renders useless many of our virtues and calls upon others which our geographical conditions prevent us from developing as easily as others who are more numerous, more massive, more continental. The age of countries is over. It is now the age of continents. Reduced as we are, we scarcely have the size of a continent.

The European question is one of adaptation without self-denial. In adapting itself it runs the risk of losing some of its essential traits, and in refusing to deny itself, it risks losing the very conditions for its survival. I have tried to state the problem, and this is, I hope, not without value. I dare not pretend to have solved it.

—Translated by Wallace Fowlie

VENUS AND MARS

Paul Goodman

The other names I call the gods and call
them *not* gods, yet may I in secrecy
own their enormous transient souls to be
our tides: the masts are bobbing, rise and fall.
For the Mother of Love has her inscrutable
favor irradiated over me,
I, poisoned, smile her smile and I see
her smiling while I sicken. And the squall
of Mars' cornet reels me into the wars
nostrils aflare as if I were the horse
War-Horse that Whirlwind to the Sufferer
among his horrible sores and losses did
describe, so he forgot all things that were
and would be, and his hairs on end stood.

THE ARK OF NOAH

A STUDY IN THE SYMBOLISM OF MICHELANGELO

Edgar Wind

Even sacred letters have their Silenus. If you remain at the surface, the thing may appear ridiculous; but when you penetrate to the hidden spirit, you will adore a divine wisdom.

—ERASMUS, *Sileni Alcibiadis*

Among the "Sacred Writings" of Pietro Aretino perhaps the most remarkable was his book of Genesis, which ended with a prophetic *Dream of Noah.* In it, the Patriarch was seized with a vision of the incarnation and passion of Christ. The romantic audacity of the book was expressed in its title: *The Genesis of Pietro Aretino, with the vision of Noah, in which he sees the mysteries of the Old Testament and of the New.*

Quite unjustly the name of Pietro Aretino has been attached to the sister arts of blasphemy and blackmail. In connection with Michelangelo, he is chiefly remembered for a brazenly truthful and very irreverent letter in which he held up a vexing mirror to Michelangelo's face. This caricature, one of the most accomplished in its genre, Aretino declined to publish; and it would not have reached and shocked the nineteenth century had not Michelangelo himself, who had a marked taste for the bizarre, chosen to preserve and circulate this unflattering portrait, which its author had asked him to destroy.

But regardless of current misapprehensions concerning the nature of that splendid combination of jester and prophet which the Renaissance admired in the "Divine Aretino," his sacred writings cannot be dismissed (despite the angry voices of Burckhardt and Symonds) as the performances of a hypocrite. Neither Vittoria Colonna nor the Marchese del Vasto, who officially sponsored these devout produc-

tions, would have been innocent enough to be deceived, or sufficiently insecure to be intimidated. For a resourceful pamphleteer to become a biblical author was in their eyes a triumph of religion, particularly as Pietro Aretino "had a vanity in being thought easy." He could be trusted, in his supposedly careless manner, to endow the biblical stories with all the freshness and color of a modern parable, and without impairing their sacred style. While his books on the humanity of Christ and on the lives of the Virgin and of St. Catherine read like hymns composed in the jubilant manner of some of Titian's religious paintings, it is unmistakable that in his *rifacimento* of Genesis he relied for the grandiose effect of the finale on an attempt to compete with Michelangelo. The prophetic sleep of Noah at the conclusion of this book recalls the last picture on Genesis in the Sistine Ceiling, in which Noah is represented drunk and asleep (fig. 1).

To link the Old and New Testaments through a dream was, of course, a purely literary device reminiscent of epic poetry and philosophical novels, and hence quite alien to Michelangelo's plastic imagination. But the use made by Aretino of this contrivance was to bring out, as in Michelangelo's picture, the prophetic significance of the sleeping Noah, whose very name was translated as *requies.*

Stretched out unconscious in the hut of his vineyard and derided because of his nakedness (Genesis 9:20-27), the drunken Noah was regarded by the Church Fathers as a prophetic image of "Christ drunk with his passion"—a token of the "sacrament of the chalice." According to St. Augustine, this sacrament could not have prevailed

> had not Christ, as foretold by the Prophets, . . . slept in his passion as in the inebriation of foolishness which is wiser than men, and the weakness of the mortal flesh thus being laid bare as stronger than men by the secret council of God.

This parallel between the "foolishness" of Noah and of Christ was first drawn in the third century, when St. Cyprian defended the sacrament of wine. Transmitted by St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Isadore of Seville, and a succession of minor Church Fathers and Doctors, the mystery of Noah was illustrated in the popular *Biblia Pauperum,* where the Derision of Noah was juxtaposed to the Derision of Christ (fig. 2). The text between the two pictures explains that "the sleeping Noah signifies Christ, whom the Jews crowned with a crown of thorns," the mocking of Christ thus being foreshadowed in the mocking of Noah by his son Ham.

It was in order to stress this prophecy in the Sistine Ceiling that Michelangelo put the Delphic Sibyl next to the picture of the Derision of Noah. In the *Sibyllinic Oracles,* she foretells the coming of a saviour *"qui traditur in manus infidelium et corona spinea coronabi-*

tur." Popular woodcuts of the Renaissance show her holding a crown of thorns: "*Vaticinatur de Christi coronatione.*" Michelangelo refrained from supplying the Prophets and Sibyls with such explicit signs, preferring to convey their prophetic message through the pictorial contexts in which he placed the figures. On seeing the Delphic Sibyl next to the Derision of Noah, we are to understand that this is a prophetic image, foreshadowing the Derision of Christ. And the mystical reading is further stressed by the presence of the prophet Joel. Appearing on the opposite side of the same painting, he confirms the Sibyl's prophecy by a concordant passage, addressing the drunken owner of the vineyard as a man of sorrows:

> Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth. For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion. . . . He has laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree . . . even all the trees of the field are withered because joy is withered away from the sons of men. (Joel 1:5-12)

"And thus the planting of the vineyard of Noah," St. Augustine concludes, "and his getting drunk from the fruit, and his exposing his nakedness in his sleep, and the other things there done and recorded, are weighted with prophetic meanings and covered with prophetic veils." The allegory extends to the minor incidents in Michelangelo's picture. As the passion of Christ is prepared by his incarnation, so the drunkenness of Noah is preceded by the planting of the vine. The earth which Noah is seen digging in the background ("And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard"—(Genesis 9:20) is the "vineyard of the Lord Zebaoth," of which the fruit is made manifest in Noah's drunkenness and humiliation. And further, the quarrel between the three sons of Noah, two of whom tried to protect their father against the mockery of the third, was said to have established a triple division among the people of the earth; for "these are the three sons of Noah, and of them was the whole earth overspread" (Genesis 9:19). While the descendants of Ham, who laughed at his father's nakedness, were a race of infidels, the races of Shem and Japheth formed the two bodies of the *Ecclesia Judorum* and the *Ecclesia Gentilium*; and a prophetic significance was attached to the fact that the son "in the middle" (*medius*) was the betrayer and scoffer, being equally removed from the primacy of the Jewish disciples and the plenitude of the Gentiles. Thus the sharing of the creed between Prophets and Sibyls, who represent the harmony of the two churches in their common fight against infidels, is mysteriously preordained by the drunkenness of Noah which produces a division between his sons.

In the fifteenth century it was not unusual to treat the theme of Noah's drunkenness with amusement, as in Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco. Michelangelo did not ignore this jocose tradition, easily associated with mystical eccentricity. There is humor in his representation of this enormous vat behind the outstretched figure of the Patriarch. Also the homely rendering of the pitcher and bowl suggests the pleasant occupation of Noah before he fell asleep. Yet these very utensils, pictured with a realistic insistence as a tangible still-life of jug, basin, and butt, are wrought with extravagant overtones as they suggest the implements of a tragic ritual. The wine in the great tub signifies blood and would have suited the fancy of St. Catherine of Siena who spoke of a *barile di vino* and a *bottega del sangue* to indicate the enormity of Christ's sacrifice. Such monstrous images are favored by mystics as adequate expressions of the supernatural—the Red Sea, for example, through which the Israelites walked to safety, being taken as a symbol of the water of baptism tinged red by the blood of Christ. Imaginations accustomed to such exorbitant metaphors might recognize in the huge barrel of Noah a shape resembling a baptismal font. Moreover, the winepress, symbolically interpreted in Revelation (14:20), had become so familiar a symbol of the Passion that popular imagery—always extreme in the literal-minded rendering of mystical events—produced the horrible picture of "Christ in the winepress."

Against these excesses of a pious imagination, Michelangelo's painting of the Drunkenness of Noah stands out by the humane economy of its pathos. He had learned from the Ancients how to treat an eccentric subject with reverence; and the Bacchic setting and appurtenances of the scene are indications of his debt. The drunken Noah is modeled after the drunken Silenus, who was also exposed to the derision of the young. And there is nothing disrespectful in the analogy. In the Bacchic mysteries, as Michelangelo knew, the pagans had anticipated the Christian belief that a tragic secret lies hidden behind the joys of drinking. The god of revelry who invites his votaries to throw off the old life and acquire the new is the dark god of purification and death, holding out the promise of after-life. In the drawing of a *Children's Bacchanal,* Michelangelo later resumed the motifs of Noah's story in the playful style of a pagan fantasy.

"Eight souls" (in the words of the Epistle of Peter) survived the ordeal of the Deluge. In the *Sacrifice of Noah* (fig. 3), these eight—Noah and his wife, his three sons, and their wives—are assembled in front of the wooden planks of the Ark, with the open door at the side. They perform a sacrifice of burnt offerings, taking "of every clean

Fig. 1 MICHELANGELO: *The Drunkenness of Noah*—the Sistine Chapel

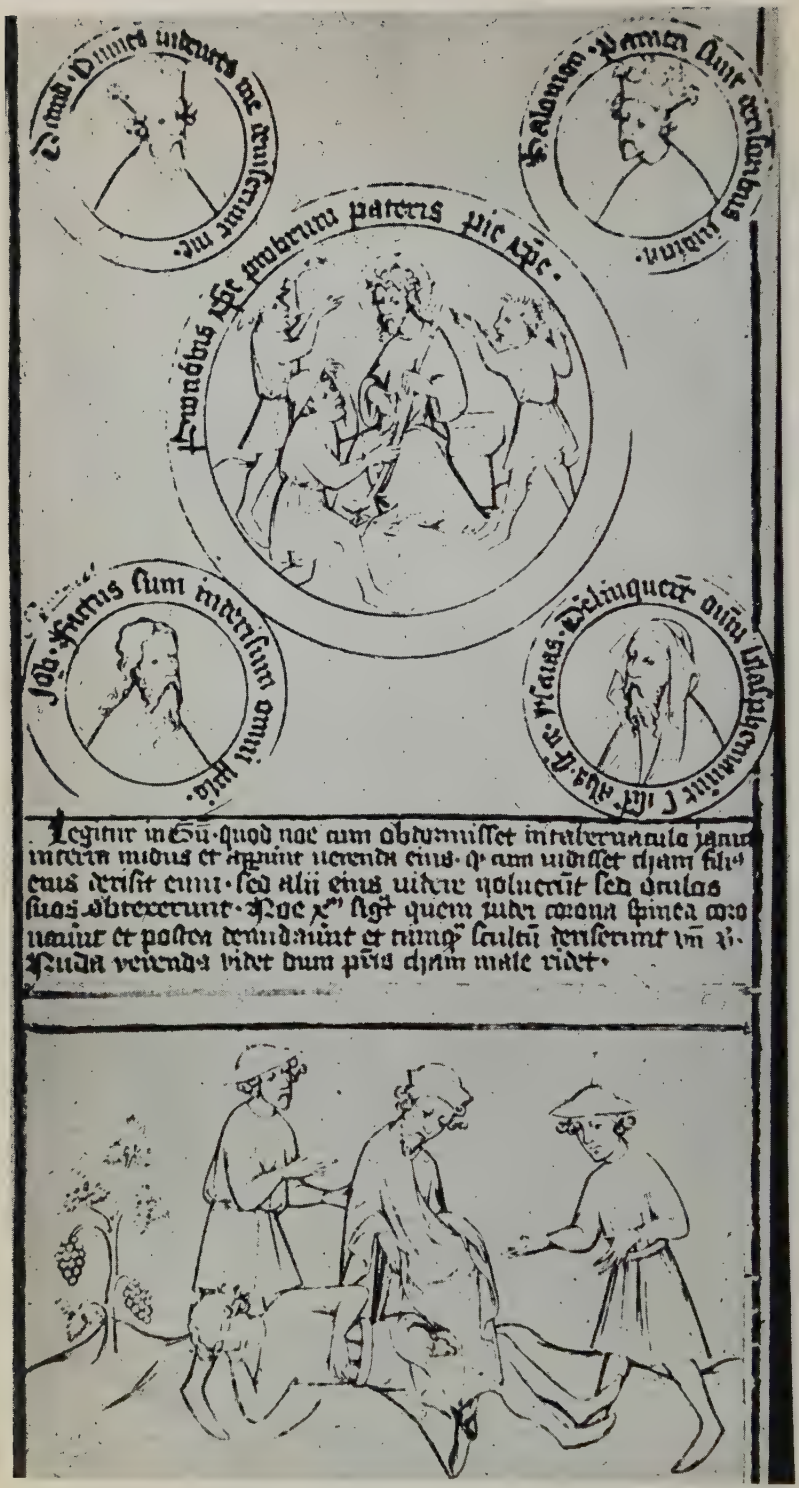

Fig. 2 Biblia Pauperum: *The Derision of Christ and of Noah*

Fig. 3 MICHELANGELO: *The Sacrifice of Noah*—the Sistine Chapel

Fig. 4. MICHELANGELO: *The Deluge*—the Sistine Chapel

beast and of every clean fowl" (Genesis 9:20) so as to appease the Lord. A ram has been killed, another is brought for slaughter, and a couple of birds are carefully handed to the boy engaged in preparing the victims.[1]

The figure bringing the birds is a woman, and so also is the figure carrying the wood, in spite of her masculine stature. She is clad in a garment, as are the other women and also Noah, whereas the three boys are naked. The son "in the middle" is again Ham, easily recognized by his cropped hair. As his name was translated as *calidus* (hot), he has been assigned the role of fanning the fire.

One of Noah's daughters-in-law seems to perform the office of a priestess. Placed next to Noah behind the altar, she lights a faggot while she shields her face. This ritual gesture Michelangelo has taken from classical representations of the Death of Meleager. In the ancient legend, the mother sacrificing her son thus lifts her arm in holy terror as she lights the enchanted faggot. While the fire is started on the altar in this ominous way, Noah points to heaven as if he were prophesying; his wife listens intently.

As the patriarch was venerated as a prophet (he is represented as *Noe profeta* in a Florentine engraving c. 1470), so one of his daughters-in-law was regarded as a sibyl, the tradition going back to Hellenistic times when her oracles were first recorded. In these, she claimed to have come from Babylon but foresaw that "the mortals in Hellas will call me by another city, saying that I am from Eritrea." But whether called Babylonian or Eritrean, the sibyl is of Noah's family:

> For the world was flooded with water, and a single pious man remained, who drove over the waters in a house of cut wood with the beasts and fowls so that the world would be filled again: of him am I a daughter-in-law, . . .

Her association with the history of the Deluge became a persistent feature of the pictorial tradition,[2] and though Savonarola was not always friendly to such pagan intruders, her image appears on a title page of his sermons on the Ark of Noah. As she and Noah join their prophecies in Michelangelo's picture—the sibyl of the Gentiles and the patriarch of the Jews—the group behind the altar again adumbrates the division of the Church into *Ecclesia Judorum* and *Ecclesia Gentilium*.

Despite the sibyl's insistence that she came from Babylon, Michel-

[1] The fresco is damaged and has been badly restored by a painter who did not know these were birds. They have been described as "entrails."

[2] In a Dutch *Spiegel der Sibyllen* (Amsterdam, 1685), Noah's daughter-in-law (p. 625) is pictured against the background of the Deluge (p. 631).

angelo seems to have followed "the mortals in Hellas" who preferred to call her Eritrean. For again it can hardly be accidental that Michelangelo inscribed the name *Eritrea* under the Sibyl placed next to this picture. In the *Sibyllinic Oracles,* the Eritrea prophesies of the humble commonwealth of the new belief: *"De excelso celorum habitaculo prospexit deus humiles suos."* The same faith which in the scene of Noah's drunkenness became a cause of dissension between his sons is here professed in unison by his entire family.

Noah himself was said to have mediated between the Old and the New Dispensation. Having known the world both before and after the Flood, he was described by Renaissance theologians as a Hebrew counterpart to the Roman Janus; and like the latter, they chose to imagine him with two heads, looking into the past and the future.[3] Michelangelo translated this image into more human terms. The old and the young woman between whom Noah stands suggest the two worlds which are combined in his person. The sacrifice he offers in conformity with the Old Law—a "burnt offering," a "sweet scent to the Lord"—is a token of the New Sacrifice of Atonement which the Sibyl foresees like Noah, and of which she expresses her foreknowledge by a tragic gesture.

In the background to the left a group of animals, an elephant, a horse, an ass, and an ox, present a suggestive variety of former inmates of the Ark. While the elephant and the horse disappear in the background, great prominence is given to the ox and ass whose heads are joined as in a monstrous image. The ox rolls his eyes, and the ass brays violently. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not consider . . . They have forsaken the Lord" (Isaiah 1:3).

These words of Isaiah, one of the most famous of all his prophecies, account sufficiently for his presence next to the image, although Isaiah, the great critic of sacrifices, is a strange witness to quote in support of Noah's burnt offering: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? says the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of

[3] Leone Ebreo, *The Philosophy of Love (Dialoghi d'Amore)* (tr. F. Friedeberg-Seeley and J. H. Barnes, 1937), p. 292: ". . . Noah: who, after the Flood, on account of his discovery of wine, was called Jajin, because in Hebrew this signifies wine; and he is depicted with two faces reversed, because he witnessed the age before and after the Flood." For the ingenious Annius of Viterbo and his pious compatriot Aegidius, it was easy to jump from Jajin to Janus. The persistence of this humanist vagary is proved by the genealogy of the founders of Rome in Jacobus Laurus' *Antiquae Urbis Splendor* (1641), which still refers to Janus as *"quem cum Annio Viterbiensi Noem multi existimant."*

bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats" (1:11).[4] The delight taken by the Lord in the sweet savor rising from Noah's altar ("and the Lord smelled a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake") seems hardly to confirm Isaiah's assertion that God resents burnt offerings.

A contradiction of this kind might embarrass a theologian who would limit himself to a literal reading of the Bible. But to a mystical interpreter, this is a welcome proof that the allegorical understanding is indispensable. Far from being held incompatible with the sacrifice of Noah, Isaiah's denunciation of sacrifices was quoted as proof that Noah intended his sacrifice as a mystical, not a literal, offering. It was a prophetic act, humbly performed in the foreknowledge that man's covenant with God would be ultimately established by a unique and exceptional sacrifice, of which his own was merely a symbol or type. Michelangelo's juxtaposing of Isaiah and Noah makes the mystical reading inescapable.

Again, a prophecy of the Passion is combined with images alluding to the Incarnation; for Isaiah's prophecy of ox and ass was commonly taken to refer to the Nativity, where ox and ass adore the child in the manger; and this association is strengthened in the present case by the fact that Isaiah as well as the Eritrea are prophets of the Virgin birth. Although the symbolism of the Sacrifice continues to refer primarily to the Passion, the Incarnation was meant to accompany the main theme as in a second voice, comparable to the "planting of the vine" in the background of the Drunkenness of Noah.

Given the variety of allusions in these paintings, it might seem surprising that Michelangelo omitted altogether the "Building of the Ark"—a mystery to which Savonarola dedicated forty-two sermons and which Raphael did not fail to include in the *Loggie*. The omission is explained by Michelangelo's principle of selection. He intended the three scenes from the story of Noah to illustrate the three phases of one coherent argument, the *Deluge* (fig. 4) being placed in the center between the *Drunkenness of Noah* and the *Sacrifice*. Joined to the picture of the destructive Flood, the Sacrifice of Noah conveys the idea of peaceful redemption: God's covenant with Noah is invoked by a ritual in which all the members of his family assist in perfect unity. But that concord is broken in the *Drunkenness of Noah* which produces a division between his sons. While Shem and Japheth

[4] So far as I can see, this quotation from Isaiah and the one above from Joel are the only points on which Tolnay (*The Sistine Ceiling*, 1945, p. 53) agrees with my interpretation, but without accepting the theological consequences. See pp. 47 and 57: "Whereas in the Middle Ages . . .," etc.

revere their prostrate father, Ham laughs at his humiliation. A scene of discord thus counterbalances the concord of the *Sacrifice*; and as the discord breaks out within the very family that was harmoniously united after the Flood, the two lateral pictures support the idea of the "perennial deluge" in the center.

The mystical tradition by which the Drunkenness of Noah was made to foreshadow the sacrament of wine interpreted the Deluge as a symbol of "salvation by water" and transformed Noah's Ark into an image of the Church "made safe by the wood on which hung the mediator." "What does it signify," asked St. Augustine, "that Noah is saved through water and wood? The water signifies Baptism, and the wood signifies the Cross. As Noah is liberated through water and wood, so the Church is made safe through Baptism and the seal of the passion of Christ (*passionis Christi signaculo*)." In the sixteenth century, this view was illustrated in the biblical frescoes of Raphael's *Loggie* which show among the pictures foreshadowing the Baptism of Christ a representation of the Flood; and Heemskerk, who admired and imitated Michelangelo, produced a design of the Deluge which was engraved with the inscription *Typus Baptismi*. The Bible itself had sanctioned this figure: "The long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:20-21).

There is a deliberate paradox in thus comparing the waters of the Deluge which destroy the sinner with the waters of Baptism by which he is saved. The contradiction hints at the lesson that Baptism is salvation through death. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: . . . knowing this that our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Romans 6:3-7). In a poem by Michelangelo, the earthquakes and floods attending the Crucifixion are greeted with rejoicing by man alone because he is baptized through these disasters:

. . . la terra aperse,
Tremorno i monti, e torbide fur l'acque.
. . . . . .
Gode sol l'huom, ch'al battesmo rinacque.

Before Michelangelo's fresco of the *Deluge* (fig. 4) was damaged, a living tree spread foliage over the tent of lamentation and must have formed a striking contrast to the dead tree on the top of the hill

toward which a desperate procession advances. Attempting to flee from the rising waters, the ascending figures represent the mystical "body of sin." They do not "give up their belongings" (Luke 18:22) but carry them instead of a cross. Each carries that to which he is most attached. Mothers cling to their children, men to their wives, the miser to his possessions. Others carry food and cooking utensils for which they cannot have any use; there is a skillet and a spit for roasting meats which Michelangelo introduced also as a symbol of greed (*gula*) in a drawing of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Yet rarely has sin in the face of destruction revealed itself as more gentle or more humane. Unlike the treacherous race described in the Bible, the figures mounting the hill are charitable, quiet, and sad; and as in a noble tribe struck with an undeserved calamity, their generous impulses outweigh their selfishness. To the left of the dead tree, near the edge of the painting, a couple and their child are attended by a mule; they form a pathetic group, humble in their affection, like a Holy Family on the flight to Egypt. In other instances, a pagan reminiscence adds a heroic overtone to the violence of grief. A mother brings her two infants who continue to play and smile, unaware of the disaster around them. Her features are those of a Christian Medea, contemplating the destruction of her children. Even the figures carrying food have a pious expression and proceed in silence as if they were performing a ritual act. On a wooden stool, amid pots and pans, they carry the loaves of bread which symbolize the sacrificed body; and opposite, under the tent of lamentation, appears the answering symbol of the Passion: the central figure under the tent crouches over a barrel of wine. The pivotal group of the painting shows the carrying of a corpse in upright position. This was designed by Michelangelo after the pagan model of a *Hercules Wrestling with Antaeus*; but the Herculean labor has become a deed of mercy.

In the background alone Michelangelo represented the brutal violence of the giant race at the time of the Deluge: "and every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually." There are figures who have occupied a boat and mercilessly slaughter a man who tries to board it.[5] Others climb onto the Ark where one of them is perfidiously killed with an ax. Some of those who have assailed the Ark are seen handling a ladder. This is the ladder on which Noah entered the Ark, and it can be accounted for on the literal level. But like the wood and the bread which were carried up the mountain, and like the barrel of wine in the tent of lamentation, in this landscape of the Passion the ladder near the wood of the Ark, which St.

[5] Pascal, Delacroix, and André Gide have all reflected on this barge of death.

Augustine likened to the wood of the Cross, becomes a suggestive allusion to death in Christ.

Above the Ark, the dove is seen flying—prematurely, it would seem, since the Deluge is far from completed. However, it is only fitting for the dove, in the mystical understanding of the picture, to fly over the waters of Baptism. Noah himself is represented looking out from the Ark and "putting forth his hand," which he does only after the fortieth day (Genesis 8:6-9). In the direction in which he points, an enormous crescent appears in the sky. It was believed in the Renaissance that the end of the Flood was marked by the appearance of the moon, which shone forth "a night earlier" than the sun, thus matching the biblical account of the Creation where the evening of each day precedes the morning: "And the evening and the morning were the first day."[6]

This note of promise, above the scenes of cruelty and despair, again stresses in Noah the role of *Noe profeta.* Small though his figure is, and relegated to the background, he exemplifies God's mercy in this drama of salvation; for he is safe within the Ark. According to Hugh of St. Victor, whose *De Arca Noe* is the greatest Augustinian tract on these mysteries, the Ark divides the people into three kinds (*De tribus specibus hominum respectu arcae*): "Some have in them the deluge and not the ark; these are the infidels who are caught by the passions of the flesh, and they do not know of any other life besides this transitory one." On the other side are the faithful who "during the deluge both have the ark and stay in it." But there is a third kind of people who "have in them both the deluge and the ark, yet they are not in the ark." These people

> have learned to believe through their faith that after the end of this mutability a life without death will come, but postponing this consideration they submit their souls to the love of temporal things. For the Scripture says: "Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart" (Matthew 6) . . . Hence those who place the joy of their hearts in the vanity of this world, even though they have the ark of faith, are nevertheless inwardly shipwrecked *(intus tamen naufragi sunt).* For as long as a man lives in this corruptible life where the flesh desires against the spirit, so long is this deluge in him; or rather, every man is in this deluge, but the good are in it like those who are carried over the sea by ships, whereas the sinners are in it like shipwrecked people: *sive naufragi.* (*De Arca Noe Morali,* I, viii)

These shipwrecked people—those who partake of the transcendent

[6] Leone Ebreo, *op. cit.,* pp. 142-44: "At the time of the Flood, and shortly after, the air was so densed by the vapours of waters covering the earth . . . that no light of sun or moon appeared in the world because their rays could not penetrate the density of the air . . . And . . . the moon appeared a night earlier . . . so that the appearance of the moon prepared that of the sun . . . because the evening preceded the morning in the Creation, and the rays of the moon began to prepare the air to receive those of the sun."

truth but, while believing in the power of the sacraments, still cling to their temporal affections—occupy the foreground of Michelangelo's painting. They all are, in the words of Hugh of St. Victor, "at the same time in possession and outside of the ark"; and this is why they arouse our compassion. Neither the saints who have found in the Ark a permanent refuge, nor the wicked who are doomed by their wickedness, would seem to convey a tragic sense of the Deluge. The separation between them is too simple and clear to fit the conditions of human existence. Only the third group which Michelangelo has represented as the most numerous and the most humane is afflicted with a sense of tragic guilt, and it is to them, in their *discordia concors,* that the god of vengeance is revealed as a god of love. He kills the sinners in order to free them from their sin, and so dispenses justice as an act of mercy.

The paintings of the Sistine Ceiling are not of a kind that is merely meant to give aesthetic enjoyment. They are designed to arouse meditations. And this may partly account for their opaqueness, and for their boldness in the use of metaphor. "All those who are wise in divine matters and are interpreters of the mystical revelations prefer incongruous symbols for holy things, so that divine things may not be easily accessible." The incongruities of Michelangelo's biblical imagery, which have so often been ascribed to the willfulness of his genius, were dictated by a well-defined theological plan and conformed to a fixed theological tradition. The mystical writings of Dionysius the Areopagite, in which the approach to God is through "the cloud of unknowing," were among the Neoplatonic classics translated and expounded by Marsilio Ficino and paraphrased by Pico della Mirandola (*De uno et Ente*). This revival of early medieval mysticism among Renaissance humanists had the support of the Augustinian order; and not by accident did the mantle of Platonic high priest (*Platonicorum maximus*) fall after the death of Ficino upon Fra Egidio da Viterbo, who became the general of the Augustinians under Julius II. The strength of this Augustinian Renaissance may be judged by the fact that the Dominican order, by tradition unfriendly to the use of Platonic metaphors, did not resist the contagion but exhibited a most virulent form of it in Savonarola and his pupil, Sante Pagnini. The latter's *Isagoge eis Sacras Litteras,* an introduction to the mystical reading of the Bible, was deliberately composed after the model of St. Augustine. By the time Michelangelo came to Rome, this was the official theology of the papal court. *"Le fond de tout grand génie,"* wrote Stendhal, *"est toujours une bonne logique. Tel fut l'unique tort de Michel-Ange."*

LET US NOW PRAISE THE ARTIFICERS

Brewster Ghiselin

Uneasily as a tall, long
Train on a trembling trestle,
You cross to something else,
Hearse-dark engine haloed
In steam, almost at standstill,
Driving rods dipping and rising in
A tiptoe, gingerly slipping—

Forward as if
At each next touch
Gently tangential
On stilted steel
Death, in its delicate
Cracked shell, might hatch.

The thick-bodied, thick-breathed
Freight passed, a while past,
Blind as iron,
Trembling untroubled.

Some stand in station
Fearful of artifacts,
Even of themselves
(Whom sad man made).

ITALIAN FICTION

THE NEW REALISM

Guglielmo Alberti

THE ALLIED FORCES that trampled the shattered soil of the peninsula as they marched north from Sicily actually rediscovered Italy. Instead of the country of picturesque scenery, eternal sunshine, and glorious vestiges of the past, the advancing armies, coming in closer touch with the native population than the tourist ever had, discovered the reality of Italy. Their more perceptive and less prejudiced appraisal was powerfully enhanced when, the war hardly over, the new Italian films appeared. These were unanimously hailed as masterpieces and defeated, impoverished, humiliated Italy suddenly came to the headlines.

Once again, as seems always to be the case with continental films, "stark realism" is what world critics praised in Italian pictures, especially in opposition to that familiar slick or maudlin product of Hollywood. Such realism took the public rather by surprise, as no hint of it was noticeable in former Italian film production. One must keep in mind, however, that the Italian film industry developed under Fascist censorship, which had banned all foreign films suspected of impairing Italian morals or morale. It is certainly to the credit of the Italian spirit that no sooner was Rome liberated and film production resumed than truth, so long repressed, was so powerfully depicted in all its horror and grandeur. The story of Nazi terror and of the heroic Underground could not have been told with greater poignancy and restraint than in *Open City*. As for other Italian films since produced in this realistic vein, none, to my mind, can be said to reach the same level—except the one which far surpasses it, *The Bicycle Thief*. What is it, one wonders, that makes the new Italian films so popular with non-Italians, while, as is known, the average Italian film-goer does not seem to care much for them?

One might say it is probably still a form of the old delusion in reverse: it is still picturesqueness, but *à rebours;* it is the land of romance stripped of conventional romanticism and made all the more attractively romantic by being presented in its cruder aspects; it is the instinctive play of unchecked Italian vitality given exaggerated prominence in the representation of Italian everyday life. Let us take *Bitter Rice,* De Santis' film, as most indicative both of this "manner" and of the response it excites in non-Italian audiences. An Italian journalist writing from Paris has told the story of how he was complimented by a French colleague on the refreshing outspokenness of the Italian films: *Bitter Rice,* the Frenchman said, was a new and gratifying example. In vain did the Italian journalist try to point out that the truculence of the film could hardly be commended or justified on artistic grounds, in vain did he try to persuade his enthusiastic friend that the film was absurdly misleading as a picture of present-day Italian life. The Frenchman would hear nothing of it; nothing could induce him to believe *Bitter Rice* was anything but "the naked truth." The Italian journalist evidently suffered from a reactionary bias.

Here again we have fiction outstripping fact. But, as I say, *Bitter Rice* shows the realistic school at its most negative and repetitious. At the other extreme, *The Bicycle Thief* carries to perfection, by its unobtrusive wording, the message for which the realistic school must indeed be commended without reserve. It depicts the condition of men by the tens of millions in the modern world by telling the inconspicuous story of a bill poster who is robbed of his one possession, an old bicycle, by a man certainly as poor as himself. Driven by despair to steal a bicycle in turn, so as to carry on his inferior job, and caught in the act, he is after all set free. But what is freedom in a world where social organization is such that lowly labor itself has become a privilege. More than twenty years ago, King Vidor was bold enough to have his remarkable film, *The Crowd,* end on nearly as disconsolate a note: the hero fails to make a living for himself and his family and is lost in the whirlpool of an American big-city crowd. As everybody knows, *The Bicycle Thief* takes place in Rome and was all shot on location, but none of the Eternal City's famous aspects is shown; its artistic and historical monuments are ignored throughout the nerve-racking chase. The bill poster and his six-year-old son hurry wearily along the squalid modern suburbs, where a ruined archway, a broken column, a stray acanthus leaf occasionally strike one more strident note of contrast. This cheerless atmosphere and sense of desolation, subtly understated all through the film by De Sica, is to be found, not

always conspicuous but constantly recurring, in contemporary Italian literature also. Whether arising from material conditions or from moral and spiritual ones, and affecting all aspects of life, this mood of depression, of course, is part of that general pessimistic outlook prevailing in contemporary world literature; but it must be pointed out that it has definitely traceable sources, pertaining especially to the history of modern Italian letters.

For one thing, it came, at the beginning of the century, as a reaction to the vast and pernicious influence of d'Annunzio. D'Annunzio's story is one of misused talent. His obsession with form altogether carried him away. A poet of undoubted gifts, he thought it fitting to lead a life of ostentatious luxury and supreme refinement; and in all his novels the characters are made to move in an atmosphere of flamboyant aestheticism and talk the most incredibly high-flown language. Greatly ridiculed even in his own time for his mannerisms and affectations, condemned by the Church for his brazen immorality, d'Annunzio nonetheless flooded the Italian upper middle class for some thirty years with the copious outpouring of his unchastened lyrics, novels, and dramas. The unwitting caricature of this preposterously sumptuous manner can be looked up in film libraries: early Italian films (1910-20) starring Lyda Borelli and Francesca Bertini, both extremely popular at that time, afford amusing instances of d'Annunzio's influence at its most grotesque. In 1913 d'Annunzio himself wrote the script of a spectacular film, *Cabiria,* an epic of Roman power at the time of the Punic Wars, which started a world-wide fashion to which we owe such films as *Ben Hur, The Sign of the Cross, Cleopatra, Fabiola,* and others of their kind still being produced to this day. It is no mere witticism to say that *Cabiria* started something even more fateful and fatal than a film fashion: its supposedly Roman salute and its mass choreography were taken up by Fascism some ten years later.

Two contemporaries of d'Annunzio who opposed his mixture of hedonism, sensualism, heroicism (a concoction of ingredients plundered from the French decadents, the pre-Raphaelites, Swinburne, Nietzsche, Pater, Maeterlinck, and others), were Italo Svevo (1861-1928) and Luigi Pirandello (1867-1938). Both achieved belated recognition and international fame when themselves no longer young and at a time when d'Annunzio's influence was beginning to decline. Svevo, of Jewish origin and the product of a comfortable, enlightened, commercial milieu, was born in Trieste, where he spent all his life, most of it under Austrian rule. It was the time James Joyce had chosen to live in Trieste, and the connection between the two became

very close. Two important novels published by Svevo in 1892 and 1898 had passed practically unnoticed. It was not until twenty-five years later that Svevo brought out a new novel, and *La Coscienza di Zeno* suddenly gained him world attention: by then Proust and Freud had prepared the way for him. His analysis of the modern intellectual, satiated and without resources, was accomplished with a remorseless penetration which marked him as the equal of his great contemporaries. The Superman cult which d'Annunzio had so bombastically and unceasingly preached is put to shame, if only indirectly. Through Svevo's undaunted exploration of the unconscious, scarcely anything is left to the reassuring illusion of nobler motives; the severity of his probing inquiry is made bearable only by the saving grace of humor. According to Svevo, man escapes complete despair on beholding the wasteland of his inner life only by accepting ironically and without bitterness the fact that the individual, caged in by his own ego, can never attain any disinterested, beneficent relationship with his fellow sufferers. The educated upper middle class, preoccupied in introspection, certainly found in Svevo one of its most significant and delicate chroniclers.

Pirandello had been known only to a limited public through a considerable number of bitter short stories and novels rather reminiscent of the naturalistic school but focused on the problem of personality. Then his plays, for a long time turned down as not suitable for the stage, were produced just after the first World War. Great scandal was caused by the daring subjects on which the characters endlessly debated on the stage; then the wind turned, and these dramas were soon hailed in Italy and abroad as masterpieces of psychological insight and philosophical depth. By now it is clear that they were somewhat overrated. A brilliant dramatist, Pirandello, unlike Shaw, was no satirist, he was no moralist at heart. What strikes one, looking back on him, is his utter nihilism. The upper middle-class society, which had fed for decades on d'Annunzio's high-life extravaganzas, is depicted by Pirandello in all its pettiness and meanness and made to carry on its envenomed speculations which lead nowhere. Men seem to live only to discover that no redeeming link binds them together; no terrestrial, much less celestial, hope prompts them to any good. Pirandello is content with an implacable, even vindictive, social indictment. He conspicuously exemplifies not only the "political atheism" which Mazzini had denounced in a section of Italian society at the time of the Risorgimento, but total atheism; fatalism and skepticism inevitably ensue.

One must, however, bear in mind as at least a partial explanation

of Pirandello's acrimony and negativism, that he came from Sicily, a country isolated by geography and by prolonged feudal conditions of life, breeding ignorance, misery, and apathy. Thirty years before, another Sicilian, Giovanni Verga (1840-1922) had already acknowledged the doleful heritage by writing the epic of the Sicilian fishermen desperately fighting out their wretched lives only to succumb to final doom. But Verga's deep feeling for the people's suffering and courage contrasts sharply with Pirandello's *petit-bourgeois* resentfulness. Verga's narrative arouses one's sympathy all the more intensely as the artist brings out the disconsolate picture with masterly restraint. The utter hopelessness of it is tempered by an all-pervading sense of awe, adding to the stature of their destitute lot, and making their every-day language re-echo the grandeur of antique drama. *I Malavoglia,* as a work of art, is the major accomplishment of *verismo*—the Italian realistic school which developed in the wake of national unity as a reaction to the vapid *manzoniani* writers—and comes second only to *I promessi sposi,* Manzoni's unparalleled novel whose lesson was to be so sadly misunderstood by would-be followers. (This misinterpretation of Manzoni's message, both moral and aesthetic, may also partly account for the fact that *I promessi sposi* to this day is the least appreciated, if not the most ignored, masterpiece of world literature.)

It must be stressed again and again that d'Annunzio's high-flown, parvenu bombast, spreading like a plague, came as a shattering blow to the great Italian nineteenth century literary tradition. Leopardi's lofty example, Manzoni's invaluable legacy, were lost on the new generations. About the year 1900, people seemed to have very little use for a man like Francesco de Sanctis (1817-1883), who had contrived to sum up the history of our literary heritage in an exceptionally stimulating book, such as, I believe, no other modern literature can boast. His *Storia della letteratura italiana* is a scholarly work which may be said, in no derogatory sense, to read like a novel. It is the work of a humanist alive to all contemporary problems, who was also and at the same time a historian, a philosopher, and an artist. Outdated as it has become in some respects, this history is sure to remain unsurpassed as an "essay" on the development of Italian literature and its innermost meaning.

There was, however, one man on whom Francesco de Sanctis' lesson was not lost—Benedetto Croce; and Italian culture is certainly greatly indebted to him if continuity with genuine tradition was maintained throughout those decades of pretentious ignorance, both amateur and academic. Croce, now well over eighty and an indefati-

gable worker since his earliest days, besides developing a systematic philosophy, carried on, through a large section of his writing, what might be called a lifelong meditation on Italian culture, without ever dissociating it from the cultures of other countries, or more generally, from that of the world as a whole. It must, indeed, be said that Croce for nearly half a century was the moral conscience of Italy. Even though necessarily unacknowledged by the main section of public opinion, Croce's influence was of the greatest significance for counterbalancing the irrationalism and "immoralism" first brought about by d'Annunzio and then to a large extent endorsed by Fascism. It also withstood that opposite but no less obnoxious brand of "decadentism" called Futurism, which raged about 1913 and which advocated aesthetic anarchy and moral subversion, a doctrine much to the taste of Mussolini, who openly favored it in his earliest days of power.

Croce's philosophy, derived from Hegel's idealism and linked to Giambattista Vico's much neglected views on the philosophy of history, develops as a branch of the main philosophical lineage that in modern times goes back to Kant. Regardless of such deviators as the empiricists and mysticists, Croce so irresistibly impregnated the largest section of Italian intellectuals with his particular form of rationalism that anyone who rebelled and embarked on a criticism of Croce found himself compelled to fight him on his own ground, and ultimately could not free himself from the magic circle. It actually came to this, that Croce's prepossessing personality literally cramped Italian culture. The first to resist and successfully counter Croce's domineering influence were the Marxists, who, much as they respected Croce, could not but oppose his conception of liberty, and who denounced his form of liberal culture as a typical product of the ruling class which had thwarted the progressive springs of the Risorgimento and ever since had remained in power through the relentless grip of the industrialists in the North and of the landowners in the South. Another and later challenge to Croce was launched by the existentialists, who made their appearance in Italy at about the time when in different parts of the world people started to take up Heidegger and Jaspers and Kierkegaard. Of course the Marxists are of far greater importance, especially since their main representative, Antonio Gramsci, has endowed the élite of the Italian Communist Party (which he founded in 1920) with the corpus of a humanistic philosophy that, far from disavowing Italy's classical cultural heritage, maintains that therein lie the most powerful educational resources which the people must be taught to use in their process of liberation.

It remains, of course, to be seen how and when such an extensive plan will be put into practice.

Gramsci, born in 1891 of poor Sardinian peasants, studied at the University of Turin and lived in close contact with the north Italian factory workers in the eventful years of 1917-21. Arrested by Fascist police in 1926, tried and sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment, he was never, in spite of his declining health, granted any relief from prison regulations, even till he died in 1937. He was, however, allowed to read and write, and those years of confinement were not lost for him. Whatever book or paper he could get hold of, from the weightiest to the most trifling, he immediately assimilated and, in his minute handwriting, closely filled thirty-two copy-books with jottings, notes, and essays, the equivalent of four thousand typewritten pages. These writings are now being published in volumes each dealing with a different problem: the Risorgimento, Machiavelli, Italian intellectuals and Italian culture, Croce and his philosophy, and so on. Gramsci's interests were unbelievably catholic; from an apparently insignificant article he could draw the least suspected and most pertinent conclusions. His limpid, unassuming style has the tranquil beauty of that rarest of virtues, humility.

In 1947, the Viareggio literary prize for the most remarkable book of the year was awarded *in memoriam* to Gramsci's *Letters from Jail*. There was, of course, a loud outcry at what seemed an unprecedented intrusion of politics into the world of letters. Another and louder outcry was heard when in 1949 the same prize was awarded to A. C. Jemolo, a left-wing Roman Catholic historian, for a book on the Italian Government and the Church during the last hundred years. It cannot be denied that the purpose for which the prize had been established was grievously overlooked; yet the fact and its repetition are significantly indicative of a growing dissatisfaction with literature for literature's sake, a mood to be noticed also in France for instance, but certainly characteristic of Italian intellectuals.

A similar disposition of heart and mind had closely followed the end of the other war, when peace had soon proved a delusion. Certainly the feeling was then much less widespread, and it was at that time that Emilio Cecchi, a critic, Vincenzo Cardarelli, a poet, Antonio Baldini, an essayist, Riccardo Bacchelli, a novelist, and Bruno Barilli, a musician, formed a group, *La Ronda*, with nothing in view but a literary renaissance of classical pattern. (It should be noted, however, that Leopardi, hailed as supreme model and master by *La Ronda,* is the poet of cosmic hopelessness stoically confronted.) But

while this literary creed was being expounded in Rome, Piero Gobetti, a student of humble origins and barely twenty, started in Turin, the cradle of the Risorgimento, a vigorous movement of renovation, at the same time social, political, and cultural, for the purpose of taking up again and bringing to fulfillment all that the intellectual promoters of the Risorgimento had been prevented from carrying out in favor of the people. According to Gobetti and the men of all ages who gathered around him in response to his impassioned appeal, "the revolution" to come was to be thought out and prepared in a "liberal" spirit. Hence the title of Gobetti's weekly, *La Rivoluzione Liberale,* soon followed by a literary journal, *Il Baretti,* both stressing the fact that no progress could be achieved unless it were first and foremost a moral one. Gobetti could not escape being opposed and persecuted by Fascism. He suffered a personal attack in the street, his weeklies were repeatedly censored and seized, until he realized he could only continue the fight as an exile, in a free country. He decided to settle in Paris, but had not been there a month when he suddenly died of pneumonia at the age of twenty-four.

Gobetti had been also very active as a publisher: among other important books he brought out works of Luigi Einaudi, the economist and present President of the Italian Republic, and of Don Luigi Sturzo, who had founded the left-wing Catholic Party. Gobetti's publishing house is also responsible for having discovered our most outstanding contemporary poet, Eugenio Montale. *Ossi de seppia,* his first volume of lyrics, appeared as the "Edizioni del *Baretti*" in 1925. The title, literally *Cuttlebones,* is wonderfully suggestive of some bare residuum of enduring organic life, glaring skeleton-white with a hard, abstract beauty. Montale was born in 1896 on the Ligurian coast, and the native Tyrrhenian shores are ever present in his poetry; but far from being fringed with the "yellow sands" of an earthly paradise, these shores appear to combat the surf or face a leaden sea more like a long-endured ancestral landscape. This moonlike, barren world cannot but recall another poetic territory familiar to the modern reader. In fact, Montale has translated *Journey of the Magi,* and it may indeed be said that at one time he had in common with T. S. Eliot a lyrical output alternately colloquial and cryptic, astringent in quality and supremely controlled in its free meter. But Eliot has progressed from *Sweeney Agonistes* to *Murder in the Cathedral,* not to speak of further achievements; whereas Montale, who in thirty years has produced only three slender volumes (significantly enough, the last one goes under the title of *Finisterre*), unmovedly refuses to recognize any possibility of a redeeming truth. A tragic

devastating experience, life is to be suffered unflinchingly with no illusions that we can express or celebrate anything but "what we are not, what we do not want": *cio che* non *siamo, cio che* non *vogliamo.* For the time being, this unbeguiled awareness and acceptance of his fate is man's only possible course.

Giuseppe Ungaretti (1888) and Umberto Saba (1883) share with Montale the laurels of poetic fame. Even more elliptical than Montale and with almost as small an output, Ungaretti so compresses his dramatic outcries that at times they are hardly more articulate than a gasp; his lyrics occasionally shrink to a line or two. In comparison, Saba is likely to appear both prodigal and facile; as a matter of fact, his little songs are anything but plain in pattern. Both sensitive and sensual, Saba's vein is one of passionate tenderness expressed in terms of musical and pictorial evidence, never in pitch or manner going beyond a tone of friendly colloquy, except when the poet deliberately gives vent to song and starts humming one of his echoing *canzonette* or *ariette.* Saba's main theme might be identified as that of Paradise lost but again and again desperately sought after. *La serena disperazione,* the title of a section of his *Canzoniere,* might well define Saba's more usual mood. Saba's predominant note is that of deep human sympathy: for whatever comes he is ready to attune himself to mankind or nature. A shadow on a child's brow, a seamstress merrily singing at her work, a sad-eyed sheep wearily grazing, the lustrous colors and juicy fragrance of a fruit shop, arouse from Saba immediate, quick-blooded, warm-hearted response. Despondency quickly follows, as man's maladjustment makes itself felt in this world of ours, but it is never resentful; and hopelessness, one guesses, is not quite as complete as the poet fancies it to be.

But the opposite mood—one of utter cheerlessness and moroseness—is more frequently to be found underlying the works of contemporary Italian writers. Even such a born humorist as Aldo Palazzeschi himself (1888) is no exception, witty as his novels and short stories may be. A deadly pessimist at heart, Palazzeschi introduces us to a fantastic show of grimacing puppets tossed around in a whirlwind of whim and irresponsibility: a crazy world only relieved by humane feelings never exceeding in quality a blunt flesh-and-blood sympathy. It is in *Sorelle Materassi* and *Il palio dei buffi* that Palazzeschi most successfully carries through his rollicking type of narrative; but no sooner has the merry-go-round come to a standstill than the reader is left with the overwhelming, desolate sense of a purposeless world.

Distorted as it is made to appear, and delusive as it ultimately proves to be, human nature in Palazzeschi's narrative nevertheless

infects one at first with truly Tuscan zest (he is a native Florentine) by the sheer play of unhampered physical vitality. No such preliminary reaction is to be experienced with Moravia. Debased nature in all its aspects is his one persistent theme. Alberto Moravia, born in Rome in 1907 and now a writer of established fame, gained immediate recognition some twenty years ago with *Gli indifferenti,* an adolescent, yet remarkably constructed novel which mercilessly portrayed characters belonging to that ex-d'Annunzian middle class which Pirandello had already put on the stage. It might be added incidentally that it was the passive support of this class on which the Fascist regime, to a large extent, relied. Though condemned by Fascist authorities, the book was not banned, since Moravia's social indictment proved "indifferent" enough as a matter of fact, and could hardly be called revolutionary. Since the early days of his constantly successful career, Moravia has undoubtedly developed into a consummate novelist, but his talent is one that cannot evolve except in one direction; it is the self-same piece of unfertile land he keeps on endlessly cultivating. The reader is not spared one sordid detail as Moravia somewhat sadistically takes him around the circles of his petty Inferno, from which apparently there is no exit. That makes it difficult, in my opinion, to call Moravia a moralist, as is often being done, his denunciation of evil remaining too passive and too self-satisfied. In Moravia's recent production, *Agostino* refreshingly stands out as a felicitous short novel based on adolescent experience; but *La Romana* is perhaps more typical of his rather mechanical technique in storytelling. For one thing, Moravia's prose affords an excellent example of the comparatively new, unsophisticated, direct style evolved in contrast to d'Annunzio's turgid and precious one.

What a harassing problem for the Italian writers, that of style, and especially that of narrative style! The antique popular tradition from which Dante and Boccaccio had instinctively derived inspiration and matter for their masterpieces was buried by the hollow and pedantic literary academies from the sixteenth century on. So the problem of a style alive to contemporary requirements could not fail to make itself felt when the urge towards liberty became more and more impelling in the last decades of the eighteenth century. The problem reached a crucial stage when Manzoni found himself confronted with the quandary: a major novel to write, and no adequate language. Manzoni wrote *I promessi sposi* three times over, and as a consequence, the Italian language found itself utterly revolutionized. In the process of solving an individual artistic problem, Manzoni had solved one of far-reaching cultural and social importance. *I promessi sposi,* a story

based on a seventeenth century episode, did not work less potently for the unity of Italy than the bands of volunteers rising from all parts of the peninsula and pressing for political action in the cause of independence. Unfortunately, as has already been said, Manzoni's example was misinterpreted by his literary followers, and what remained of his teachings was swept away by the supposedly modernistic *fin-de-siècle* currents.

La Ronda's attempt in 1919 to start a literary renovation under the strict guidance of so aloof a master as Leopardi proved soon enough a noble failure. The group dispersed, and Emilio Cecchi, the most subtly talented of the *rondisti* and endowed with an extremely sensitive critical mind, decided to provide the public with firsthand information about less well known aspects of foreign literature, mainly contemporary. We certainly owe to Cecchi a most intelligent introduction to Proust, Valéry, Joyce, and D. H. Lawrence. Cecchi's rare knowledge of English literature as a whole, and his very special knowledge of the American classics, entitled him to stress the importance of contemporary American fiction. It did not take long for translations of contemporary American authors to be produced, and the unexpected result was that some of the translators, themselves fiction writers, were considerably affected both in subject matter and style by such authors as Dos Passos, Faulkner, and Hemingway.

With Fascism well established and without the slightest prospect of getting rid of its avowedly antidemocratic oppression, those among the Italians who did not satisfy themselves with Arcadian *l'art-pour-l'art* flute-playing, turned to contemporary American literature as the only one which, short of carrying a message of actual liberation, came nearest to what sounded most like an impassioned vindication of truth. It is irrelevant to discuss here the merits of this "realism." The fact remains, however, that as a literature of extensive indictment, American contemporary fiction to this day is unequaled for the craft with which it meets the demand of a narrative alive to the perplexing conditions of growing precariousness, both material and spiritual, in which we all live. This was strongly felt by such young writers as Cesare Pavese and Elio Vittorini, who, each in his own way, attempted to produce in Italian literature an equivalent of the process so brilliantly carried out in American fiction—the apparently informal style with its popular forms of expression, such as colloquialisms, slang in general, and all sorts of neologisms. The danger of blunt imitation and mere mimicry was successfully avoided by both. They interpreted the American lesson mostly in the sense that no revivifying inspiration can be sought for except by going back to the most ele-

mental themes, such as those afforded by the life and traditional ways of each people. Accordingly, both of them developed an extremely vernacular, broken style, Pavese more in Faulkner's line, Vittorini re-echoing Hemingway's. Pavese has struck his most convincing notes in *Paesi tuoi* (1941), a tragic story about peasants in Piedmont, and in *La casa sulla collina* (1948), an account of the underground guerrilla between September 1943 and April 1945, as viewed by a half-hearted intellectual. Vittorini (a Sicilian for a number of years living in Florence, where he contributed to *Solaria* and *Letteratura,* two important literary reviews responsible for keeping contact with the outer world during the two decades of Fascist blockade) is to be found at his best in *Conversazione in Sicilia,* where the land of Verga is poignantly rediscovered by an "expatriate" son coming back from the mainland after years of estrangement, and in some parts of *Uomini e no,* a chronicle of the *Resistenza* in Milan under Nazi occupation.

It is quite evident the inspiration to which we owe the best of such books is the same which has enkindled new life in Italian film production, and it may be correctly called a new spirit. One must, however, not forget that already Verga in his day had turned to the soil and the people as a quickening source of artistic creation and, consequently, had brought out dreary and arresting aspects of life and nature considered in an age-long historical process. And had not Manzoni's authoritative, insistent plea been a plea for genuine feeling and unprejudiced outlook, however distasteful it might be to face such facts as the misery of the people, the arrogance of the mighty, the ruthlessness of prevailing power, the unmitigated horrors of war, famine, pestilence, the desolation and shame of dehumanizing chronic social conditions? On whom but on a destitute couple of silk-weavers of peasant stock had Manzoni focused his whole-hearted attention, making them the center of the story, which indeed takes place in the first decades of the seventeenth century, but was actually inspired by the life of Lombard peasants in his day? And it must be remembered Manzoni had to take precautions, as he lived and wrote under the rule and censorship of Austria's bigoted government. Manzoni, a devout Roman Catholic, a Christian whose indomitable faith has had no equal in our literature since Dante, did not refrain from portraying in his novel a priest criminally neglectful of his duty and a sinful nun as an accomplice in a deed of blood. The balance is of course restored with such other characters as the saintly Cardinal Borromeo and the humble, charitable capuchin, Padre Cristoforo; but that does not lessen the fact that Manzoni faces evil without flinching

and his indictment is devastating. How sentimentally bombastic in comparison is Victor Hugo with his nineteenth century social epic, *Les Misérables!* How verbose and rhetorical Jean Valjean and Cosette in comparison to Renzo and Lucia, the hapless lovers of Manzoni! They indeed are the real *misérables*, the elected children of God. Manzoni could not but respond to their mute appeal reaching through the ages. They represent that vast anonymous mass towards which he had always felt himself drawn in his study of history, they represent the millions that the historical record utterly ignores. As such they are judged to be negligible, despicable refuse by Don Rodrigo, the self-engrossed nobleman: "Who ever knows that such people exist? They are as if lost on the face of the earth. They actually have not even got a master"; and he scornfully concludes: "*Gente di nessuno*" (They are nobody's people). Of such, it has been said, is the Kingdom of Heaven. But it has also been said: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

For the forgotten, the ignored, the overlooked, be they a majority or a minority, it will be the task of the novelist to act as their spokesman: that seems to be the consistent trend in contemporary Italian literature. But of course, artistic achievement does not inevitably follow—far from it; the gaudy halls of inferior literature are paved with the best of intentions. As much as Ignazio Silone may compel respect in his endeavor to disclose the misery of Southern Italy and the bestiality of the Fascist regime, one regrets to say that the fame achieved by his novels mainly rests on a mistaken judgment. The self-indulgent emotionalism, the blatant local color, the all too loose form make it difficult to accept Silone without considerable reservations. The case is definitely worse, in my opinion, as far as Giuseppe Berto's novel, *The Sky Is Red*, is concerned. The sad lot of displaced and abandoned children in a bombed area, their wholesale and candid immorality, ostensibly approached with simplicity of heart and style, are rather viewed from a conventional literary angle; the sentimental psychology of the characters can scarcely claim distinction. Two books stand out as significant in contemporary Italian production, and not only from a literary point of view: *Christ Stopped at Eboli* by Carlo Levi, and *A Tale of Poor Lovers* by Vasco Pratolini. Both books are known in translation to the English-reading public, and consequently need no introduction. I would, however, like to remark incidentally that the forlorn inhabitants of Lucania, described by Carlo Levi as carrying on their unchanging lives hardly above the level of the famished goats and swine amongst which they toil, recall

a sentence from Manzoni's essay on the history of the Lombards in the eighth century which introduced his tragedy of *Adelchi*:

> An immense multitude of men, one generation after the other, passing over the face of the earth, each handing on its own plot of ground without leaving a trace in history, is a sad phenomenon the importance of which cannot be overlooked; and the causes of such a silence may prove far more illuminating than many factual discoveries.

The experience of this silence, recurring throughout history, was so disquieting to Manzoni that the idea grew on him to record the story of an obscure couple taken at random from the anonymous mass of laboring peasantry living practically on the same spot where the first Lombards had dwelt a thousand years before. Upon this central theme Manzoni built the masterly edifice of his novel. Carlo Levi's account of his exile at Grassano and Galliano touches one through the humble fraternity shown by the author in his relationship with these disinherited human beings. Timelessness weighs so heavily upon them that very little can be done on their behalf, but that much he does with purity of heart, first in his medical capacity and then through taking it upon himself to speak out the truth and voice the benumbed destitution and squalor of these people. We are very far here from picturesque Italy. Despite his being a painter and sensitive to the uncanny beauty of the desolate landscape of Lucania, Levi never lets aesthetic contemplation get the better of him: that is not the least admirable aspect of his book. Humaneness and charity never cease to prompt the author further, to a higher form of humanism.

Pratolini's novel has been criticized by some for too marked a leaning toward the picturesque. I would discount such a criticism. To my mind, on the contrary, Pratolini is to be complimented for making that packed and swarming human hive—the Via del Corno, behind the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence—sound with truly genuine accents without ever slackening his style from what I would call classical terseness. Pratolini allows only that much of the vernacular to tinge the narrative as is necessary for the verisimilitude of his "chronicle," as it is actually called in Italian. Another criticism brought against Pratolini concerns his subject matter: what he aims at is maintained in some quarters to have been done before, and done better by Palazzeschi, for instance, and by others. The difference, in my opinion, lies in this: that, intense as the gusto may be with which Pratolini carries on the perfect mimicry of his innumerable characters, the effect brought about, far from resulting in a mere show

enacted for its own sake, provides an effect of vast, moving, choral resonance. One must also bear in mind that the life of this little world of artisans, workmen, shopkeepers, clerks, and prostitutes is observed and followed by Pratolini at one particular, definite moment of time. Its story, as Pratolini tells it, is inscribed in history. It takes place in Florence in 1925 and describes a midnight raid by Fascists during which a wide variety of their opponents were murdered in their own homes.

The inhabitants of that squalid lane, the Via del Corno, are also *gente di nessuno*; and now it is Pratolini who voices their hopes and fears, their virtues and vices, and above all their unconquerable faith in life. It is undoubtedly one of the major glories of the poet, of the novelist, of the artist in general, to bring to full expression the quiet murmur of the individual conscience and to act as the spokesman for the inarticulate multitude. In this last case a mass ceases to be a mass and becomes a community of persons; it ceases to be, in Manzoni's words, *un volgo disperso che nome non ha*—a far-scattered people that has no name.

A SNARE AND A DELUSION

Howard Moss

We wring from nothing all our song.
The trouble of our treble is
Too much falsetto in the voice.
The handsome joke too much destroys
Our mirrors' idiot ideas.

From one false image two are sprung.
We sing, sing-song, a vapid nothing.
By leaps and bounds it multiplies
Into chimeras for the eyes;
For ears, it has its silences.

Mirages are not sound. Let's sing
A real rebuttal to the Real.
Ideas are shapely. Are we sound
In thinking that they're square, or round?
Does terra firma mean quicksand?

Supposing, really, Nothing's real,
Or worse, that Real is nothing. Wring
From nothing then our song. The Real
Has seven jokers: Heaven, Hell,
Taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell.

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